MARVEL MASTERWORKS
THE FANTASTIC FOUR
VOLUME 26

THE FANTASTIC FOUR Nos. 278-285
ANNUAL No. 19, THE AVENGERS ANNUAL No. 14
& MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL No. 18
JOHN BYRNE

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

THE Fantastic Four

VOLUME 26

COLLECTING

THE FANTASTIC FOUR Nos. 278-285

ANNUAL No. 19, THE AVENGERS ANNUAL No. 14

& MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL No. 18

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS
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THE
FANTASTIC FOUR
NOS. 278-285, ANNUAL NO. 19, THE AVENGERS ANNUAL NO. 14
& MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL NO. 18

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FANTASTIC FOUR CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

MARVEL MASTERWORKS
CONTENTS

Introduction by Michael Higgins . . . . . *vi*

The Fantastic Four #278, May 1985
"True Lies" 1

The Fantastic Four #279, June 1985
"Crack of Doom!" 24

The Fantastic Four #280, July 1985
"Tell Them All They Love Must Die..." 47

The Fantastic Four #281, August 1985
"With Malice Towards All!" 70

An Excerpt from Secret Wars II #2, August 1985
"I'll Take Manhattan..." 94

The Fantastic Four #282, September 1985
"Inwards to Infinity!" 102

The Fantastic Four #283, October 1985
"Torment" 126

The Fantastic Four #284, November 1985
"Revolution!" 150

Marvel Graphic Novel #18, 1985
"The Sensational She-Hulk" 174

The Fantastic Four #285, December 1985
"Hero" 248

The Fantastic Four Annual #19, 1985
"Summons from the Stars!" 271

The Avengers Annual #14, 1985
"Fifth Column" 312

INTRODUCTION
BY MICHAEL HIGGINS

Although I did minor editorial revisions on some of the last pages he ever produced for Marvel, I saw Jack Kirby only once in my life—at Marvelcon '76—which, appropriately enough, was also the same convention where I first met John Byrne. A decade before, in 1967, I was 8 years old when I discovered the Fantastic Four as part of ABC's Saturday morning cartoons. My older brother had a comic collection, but he didn't keep reprints, so I ended up reading all the early FF stories in hand-me-down copies of *Marvel's Collectors' Item Classics.* This was how I first discovered the work of Jack Kirby, who along with Stan Lee, produced more than 100 consecutive issues of *The Fantastic Four.*

The very first comics I remember buying were in 1969 when comics still cost only 12¢—the four-part story when the FF were held prisoner in Latveria by Doctor Doom (*FF* #84-87). The storyline was loosely inspired by the British TV series *The Prisoner*, but as a third-grader in America, I had never heard of the show. Strange as it may seem, these four issues represented a sort of portal to a new reality. It was like I had passed from one world into another, and there was no turning back. My casual childhood flirtation with the Fantastic Four was now replaced with a more fiery intensity! I loved those comics and bought every issue from then on until I was working at Marvel and started getting them for free. I bought every back issue, too! This fervor soon spread to include the entire Marvel Universe.

The reason I wanted to work for Marvel Comics was because I was a huge comics *fan*!

I was still hooked when John Romita and John Buscema picked up the *FF* art chores after Kirby left. I followed the series faithfully when Stan first passed the baton on to Archie Goodwin and then Roy Thomas, followed by Gerry Conway, Len Wein and Marv Wolfman. You might note that each of these writers was, at one time, the editor-in-chief of the entire Marvel line. Throughout the 1960s and most of the 1970s, no one who wasn't editor-in-chief at Marvel had written what Stan proudly touted as "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!" *The Fantastic Four* might easily be considered the feather in the cap bestowed upon only those who achieved that privileged position.

Then things began to change a bit. As *The Fantastic Four* passed into the title's third decade, much of the magic certainly remained, but I think many would agree that at least a bit of the luster was beginning to fade. As the 1980s began, I think it is fairly safe to say that *The Uncanny X-Men* by John Byrne and Chris Claremont might well have earned the accolade "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!" if the vote had been given to the fans.

And then something happened. In a flash, John Byrne left *The Uncanny X-Men* behind and assumed the helm of *The Fantastic Four* with a promise to bring *The Fantastic Four* "Back to the Basics," as John titled his first issue, and restore the series to its former glory. And, that's exactly what he did. John brought the same passion, the same love and affection to *The Fantastic Four* that he'd brought to *The Uncanny X-Men*. His tenure on *The Fantastic Four* would become the second longest on record, shorter only than the original run by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. And, up until that time, John was the only artist who also scripted his own stories—and he inked most of them to boot! What made John Byrne such a formidable writer and artist is that he absolutely loved comics. To him, these characters were living, breathing souls!

First and foremost, the reason John Byrne wanted to work for Marvel Comics was because he was a huge comics *fan*!

By the time of the issues in this collection, John was five years into his run and had really hit his stride. In addition, Jerry Ordway had climbed aboard as inker and was, in my opinion, just about the best inker ever to work on John's pencils. Not only that, but John's style was changing ever so slightly. The evolution was so gradual as to be virtually unnoticeable from issue to issue, but over time, the metamorphosis was undeniable as the pages became more powerful than any of the work John had produced before. And what could this transformation be attributed to? I think the answer is obvious. As his work on *The Fantastic Four* progressed, John began to employ, actually to internalize, more and more of the distinctive elements of Jack Kirby's masterful storytelling. And by that, I don't mean John was copying panels and regurgitating old ideas. Rather, John was studying them, absorbing them, reinterpreting them. John drew inspiration from the source, revived it, restored it and resuscitated it—for a new generation of readers to discover all over again. To me, speaking strictly as a fan, for the first time in years, *The Fantastic Four* really felt like the FF that I had grown up with. John really had brought the old magic back…and the book just seemed to get better and better.

Working as assistant to editor Mike Carlin—on *Fantastic Four* during John's run and also *Rom*, because we had the once in a lifetime opportunity to collaborate with Spider-Man's legendary co-creator Steve Ditko—was the most fun I had over the many years I spent working at Marvel.

If I'm not mistaken, *The Fantastic Four* #278 splash page with Doctor Doom served as a sort of audition piece for Jerry. What can I say except that this was the very same "living, breathing" Doctor Doom I came to know and love when I read my first *FF* comics as a kid! The only thing I really didn't like about the FF at this time was Johnny's haircut. Other than that, I thought we were publishing one of the finest comic books in history. Sometimes when I think back on it, I feel like I didn't have very much to do on *The Fantastic Four*. After all, John Byrne was almost a one-man show—and I was only the *assistant* editor—but in retrospect, I was doing a lot more than simply proofreading and helping traffic the book. I was doing things most assistants didn't do.

I was the one who designed the updated cover logo that we began using on *FF* #278. I had spent a lot of time working on what I considered to be a top-notch new logo, possibly some of my best work to date. It was built around the grouping of the Fs at the beginning of each word, based around a sort of "FF" symbol. I really liked it. After I'd done it, John said he just wanted something simple that resembled the original FF logo. That being the case, I suggested we start using the bolder version that ran on *FF* #95-118. John didn't want to do that either. He wanted something like the logo used on the first issue, but with an outline. He didn't even want a drop shadow. So, I set out to create a new, slightly bulkier version of the original logo, and it was used throughout the remainder of John's run on the book, and well beyond, in fact. I also designed *The Avengers* logo used at the time, which appears not only on the cover of *Avengers Annual* #14 in this volume, but also as part of the cover copy on *FF Annual* #19.

Speaking of those Annuals, John did the pencil breakdowns for *The Avengers Annual* #14 at 11" x 17", while *FF Annual* #19 was done at "twice up" size, 14" x 21". *The Avengers Annual* was inked by Kyle Baker. I'd known Kyle since he was an intern at Marvel just a short time earlier, and I couldn't have been more pleased to witness the rapid advancement of his career. And, here's a little-known behind-the-scenes secret about the Annual crossover: So that Joe Sinnott could ink all of *FF Annual* #19 pages twice-up, and so John didn't have to waste his time drawing everything again, I was assigned the task of making larger-sized copies of all of John's *Avengers Annual* #14 pages that would also run in *Fantastic Four Annual* #19 as part of a shared sequence.

Working with a light box, I spent a weekend transferring John's work onto 14" x 21" art boards. It was breakdowns, not full pencils, so once Joe inked the nearly identical art, no one was the wiser

that the pages were Byrne breakdowns by way of Higgins—at least not until now! Mind you, all of this was done with John's knowledge and approval. For some reason, the dimensions of the art boards were not exactly proportional, so I had to shift things around just a bit. I always had fun when I got to do uncredited "clandestine" work like this, mimicking someone else. No one ever noticed, which is exactly the way it was supposed to be!

Editor Mike Carlin invariably got into the office before me every day, and one morning I came in to find Mike doing a bit of touch-up work on the inked pages of *FF* #279 after Jerry sent them in. At different times, various aspects of the comic book production process would come under more extreme scrutiny, and the art of inking was currently the focus. Mike was concerned that we were going to be taken to task for solid blacks having been placed in the foreground as well as the background, which was being particularly perused at the time, even in the work of Marvel's most professional and well-seasoned inkers. Personally, I didn't think it was a problem, especially when black placements were carefully thought through, especially by the best of our inkers, but Mike decided to play it safe and he added some extra "halos" to the figures floating against the black backgrounds of space. Yep, there's a bit of Mike Carlin inking on those pages! No one had any complaint about the black placements when that issue left house, and Mike's artistic efforts may well have been instrumental in the ease with which the issue went through the approval process and out to be printed. I should point out that the copy appearing on the cover of *FF* #279 is sort of an in-joke, "Doomsday Plus One" being a variation of *Doomsday +1*, a series John Byrne drew for Charlton Comics shortly before making the jump to Marvel in 1975.

When John Byrne talks about *FF* #282's cover, he kindly acknowledges that in those days, long before Photoshop and InDesign, I took John's relatively simple illustration—just four figures standing on a blank background—and created the "infinity effect" seen on the published cover. I can't take credit for the idea, only the execution. John explained what he wanted, and I made it happen. I don't think there was ever a doubt in anyone's mind that I would be the one handling the production work. Of course, I'd had plenty of experience from my time working in the Bullpen before I became an editor, and I also had John's confidence. We'd never done anything quite like this before, but back in the classic Byrne/Austin pages of *The Uncanny X-Men* #133-134, part of "The Dark Phoenix Saga," we'd done some fancy duplication of art in panels where Jean Grey's mind was being manipulated by the Mastermind. There the goal was to convey that what Jean was "seeing" wasn't what was really happening as she seemed to slip through time. Those effects, like the *FF* cover's "infinity effect," were created manually by me, when "cut and paste" was meant literally. For the cover, I had to mathematically figure out the reduction percentage of each image, have about a dozen photostats shot, paste each stat perfectly into position using two coats of rubber cement and then cut around each and every bit of the visible art and copy with a single-edged razor blade. Then I had to indicate all of the appropriate colors for the separators so that the images would seem to fade as they receded into the distance. Often, when trying something tricky like this, something would go wrong at the printer, but this time things worked out rather well. I must admit, I am pretty proud of the piece considering the technical limitations of the day. I think it's a striking cover that stands the test of time.

In the introduction to *Marvel Masterworks: The Fantastic Four Vol. 24*, I mentioned that it was my idea for Al Gordon to become regular inker of *FF*, but when he first took over the book, he only did two issues (#274-275) due to his busy schedule and commitment to *Rocket Raccoon*. I remembered Al doing more than two issues, though, and here's the reason why. When Jerry Ordway decided it was time to leave the book, we were sorry to see him go, but we didn't miss a beat in reassigning the inking chores to Al, who returned to the book with *FF* #284. It was such a smooth transition that I didn't even remember it! As for Jerry, he would be back in the picture—in a new capacity—soon.

Mike Carlin and I shared credit as co-editors on *Marvel Graphic Novel* #18 featuring She-Hulk, and I'm pretty happy about that because back then assistant editors weren't normally acknowledged except on letters pages. If memory serves, this is the only time John Byrne was ever inked by Kim DeMulder, another regular in Marvel's crew at the time. I'd worked with him previously on the *Beauty and the Beast* miniseries and he did some work on *The Thing* and *Rom* for the Carlin/Higgins office as well, but Kim is probably best known for his long run as regular inker of *The Defenders*.

The She-Hulk graphic novel was printed using the "cutting-edge" coloring technology of the day. Two photostats of the original art, reduced to print size, were made. One was left untouched to be used for the black plate. The second copy would be hand-painted using liquid watercolors, in this case by Petra Scotese, and then separated by camera into the cyan, magenta and yellow plates. I'd loved Petra's coloring since I was a fan and she was credited with the family name Goldberg. I thought Petra's colors were always exceptionally vibrant with a sophisticated palette that added a high level of artistic expertise to anything she worked on. I used Petra every chance I got! I think the quality of her work really speaks for itself on this graphic novel, a book that would eventually pave the way for a revival of She-Hulk's solo series, by none other than John Byrne!

Without a doubt, John Byrne was one of the quintessential artists of his generation. No one was producing as much work so consistently or of such high caliber. Despite that, more than once John has reminisced about times when he and I would really go "back to the basics." You see, during this brief period in time, John and I were able to lovingly examine page after page of Jack Kirby's original artwork before Marvel returned it to him! There was no question that what we beheld was the crowning achievement of comic art! It was truly a privilege to be granted the chance to savor firsthand so many of the actual works of genius that constituted the foundation of the entire Marvel Universe. Even at the time, we knew what we were doing was something special.

Another incredible thing about this is that John Byrne and I got to be *fans* again—*together*! We were *fans* of the Fantastic Four and we were *fans* of Jack Kirby and we had access to the veritable Holy Grail of comics! What an astonishing opportunity. I was with the man who had brought *The Fantastic Four* back to its former heights of glory, and together we were basking in the brilliance of the man who'd started it all—Jack Kirby, the "King." I was there to witness the past meet the present! It was a rather extraordinary place in history that I was blessed with the uniquely good fortune to occupy.

As for the future, little did we know that John Byrne's tenure on *FF* would soon be coming to an end…or that—having been along for the ride for more than half of his run, longer than anyone else on Marvel's editorial team—John's last issue on *FF* would also be my last…but that, as they say, is a story for another day.

For now, Face Front, True Believer!

Michael Higgins started his career with Marvel in 1978 as a Bullpen production staffer and over the next decade rose through the ranks, eventually becoming a full-fledged editor. After leaving his editorial position, Higgins continued to work for Marvel until 1999, writing, inking, coloring and lettering dozens of titles including Conan the Barbarian, *Wolverine in* Marvel Comics Presents, Punisher, Excalibur, Cable, X-51 *and* The Avengers.

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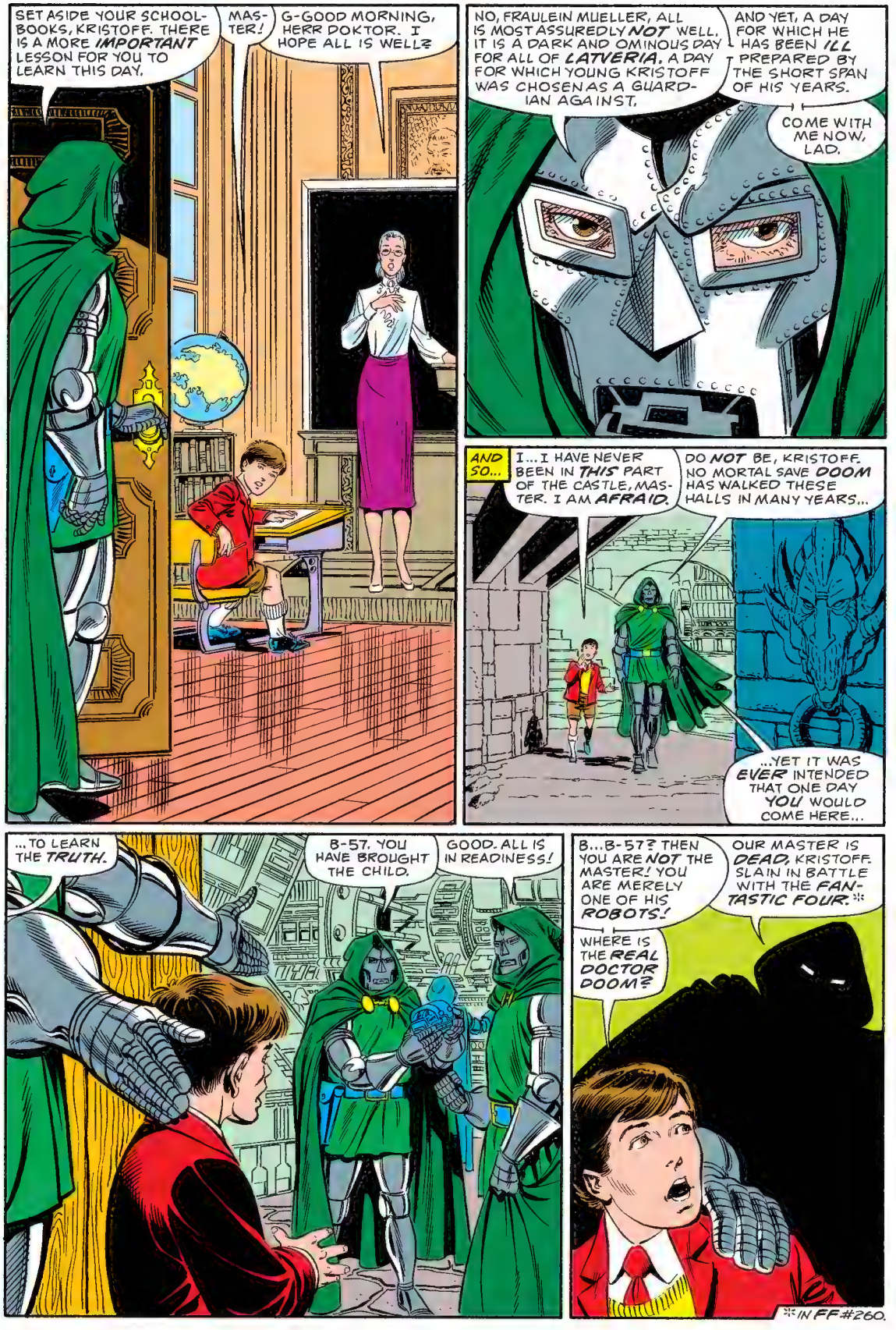
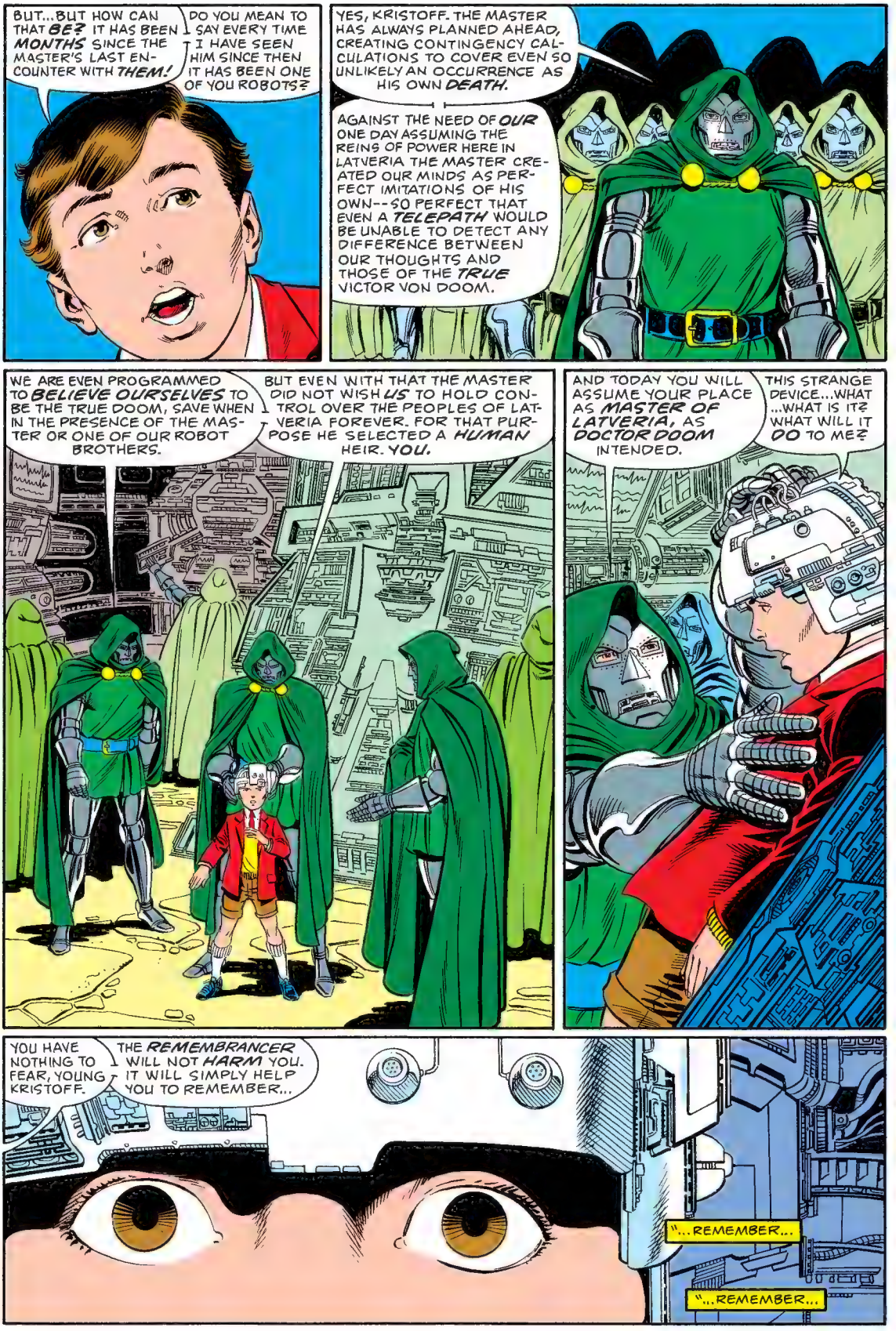
Fantastic Four
BYRNE • ORDWAY

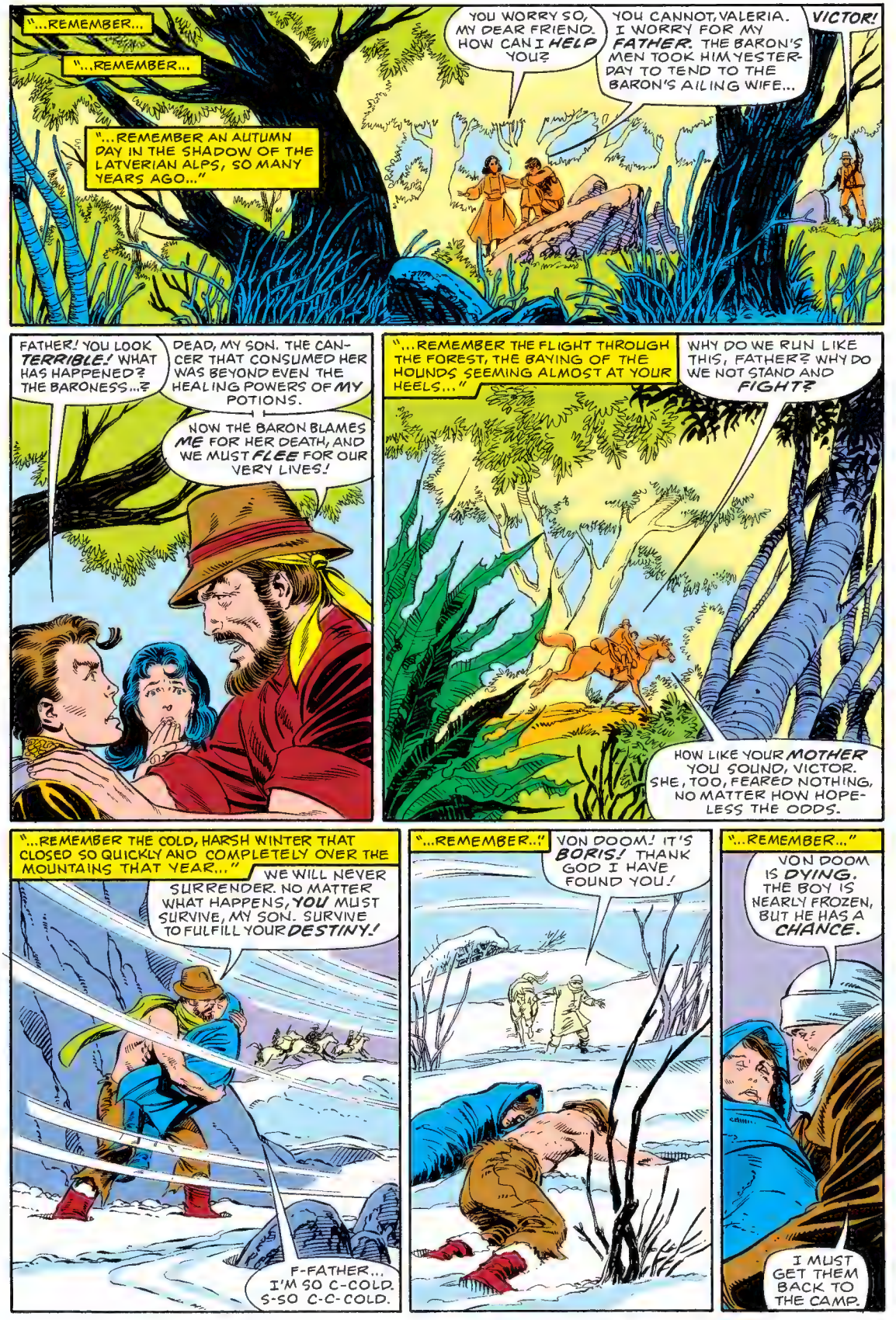
TRUE LIES

THE TIME HAS COME!
"To be ignorant of what happened before you were born is to be ever a child.
"For what is man's lifetime unless the memory of past events is woven with those of earlier times?"
Cicero (106-43 BC)

Stan Lee PRESENTS | JOHN BYRNE SCRIPT AND PENCILS | JERRY ORDWAY INKS | GLYNIS OLIVER COLORS | JOHN WORKMAN LETTERS | MICHAEL CARLIN EDITS | JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEFS

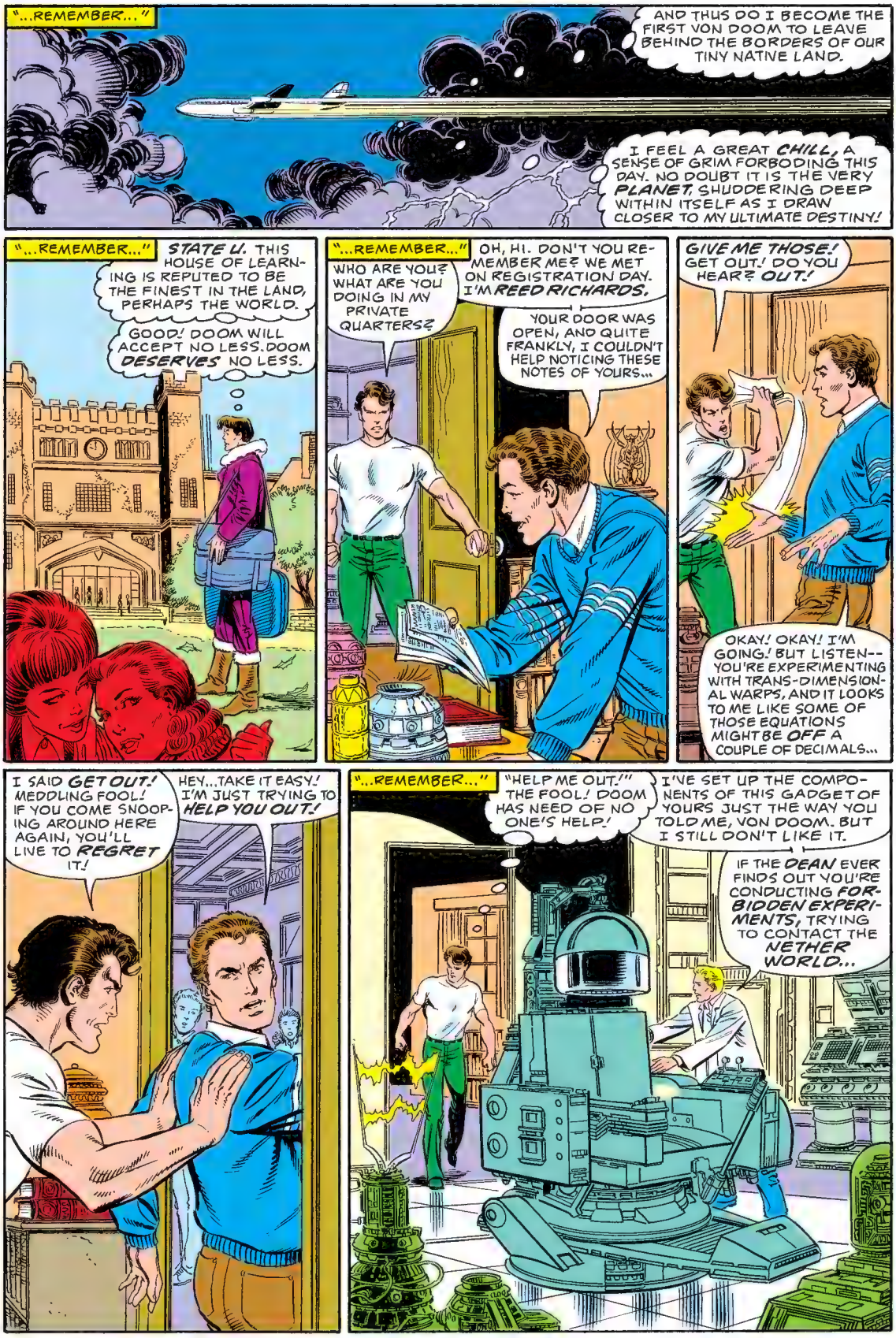

SET ASIDE YOUR SCHOOL-BOOKS, KRISTOFF. THERE IS A MORE IMPORTANT LESSON FOR YOU TO LEARN THIS DAY.
MAS-TER!
G-GOOD MORNING, HERR DOKTOR. I HOPE ALL IS WELL?
NO, FRAULEIN MUELLER, ALL IS MOST ASSUREDLY NOT WELL. IT IS A DARK AND OMINOUS DAY FOR ALL OF LATVERIA. A DAY FOR WHICH YOUNG KRISTOFF WAS CHOSEN AS A GUARD-IAN AGAINST.
AND YET, A DAY FOR WHICH HE HAS BEEN ILL PREPARED BY THE SHORT SPAN OF HIS YEARS.
COME WITH ME NOW, LAD.
AND SO...
I...I HAVE NEVER BEEN IN THIS PART OF THE CASTLE, MAS-TER. I AM AFRAID.
DO NOT BE, KRISTOFF. NO MORTAL SAVE DOOM HAS WALKED THESE HALLS IN MANY YEARS...
...YET IT WAS EVER INTENDED THAT ONE DAY YOU WOULD COME HERE...
...TO LEARN THE TRUTH.
B-57. YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE CHILD.
GOOD. ALL IS IN READINESS!
B...B-57? THEN YOU ARE NOT THE MASTER! YOU ARE MERELY ONE OF HIS ROBOTS!
OUR MASTER IS DEAD, KRISTOFF. SLAIN IN BATTLE WITH THE FAN-TASTIC FOUR.*
WHERE IS THE REAL DOCTOR DOOM?
*IN FF #260.


BUT...BUT HOW CAN THAT BE? IT HAS BEEN MONTHS SINCE THE MASTER'S LAST ENCOUNTER WITH THEM!
DO YOU MEAN TO SAY EVERY TIME I HAVE SEEN HIM SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN ONE OF YOU ROBOTS?
YES, KRISTOFF. THE MASTER HAS ALWAYS PLANNED AHEAD, CREATING CONTINGENCY CALCULATIONS TO COVER EVEN SO UNLIKELY AN OCCURRENCE AS HIS OWN DEATH.
AGAINST THE NEED OF OUR ONE DAY ASSUMING THE REINS OF POWER HERE IN LATVERIA THE MASTER CREATED OUR MINDS AS PERFECT IMITATIONS OF HIS OWN--SO PERFECT THAT EVEN A TELEPATH WOULD BE UNABLE TO DETECT ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR THOUGHTS AND THOSE OF THE TRUE VICTOR VON DOOM.
WE ARE EVEN PROGRAMMED TO BELIEVE OURSELVES TO BE THE TRUE DOOM, SAVE WHEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE MASTER OR ONE OF OUR ROBOT BROTHERS.
BUT EVEN WITH THAT THE MASTER DID NOT WISH US TO HOLD CONTROL OVER THE PEOPLES OF LATVERIA FOREVER. FOR THAT PURPOSE HE SELECTED A HUMAN HEIR. YOU.
AND TODAY YOU WILL ASSUME YOUR PLACE AS MASTER OF LATVERIA, AS DOCTOR DOOM INTENDED.
THIS STRANGE DEVICE...WHAT ...WHAT IS IT? WHAT WILL IT DO TO ME?
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, YOUNG KRISTOFF.
THE REMEMBRANCER WILL NOT HARM YOU. IT WILL SIMPLY HELP YOU TO REMEMBER...
"...REMEMBER...
"...REMEMBER...

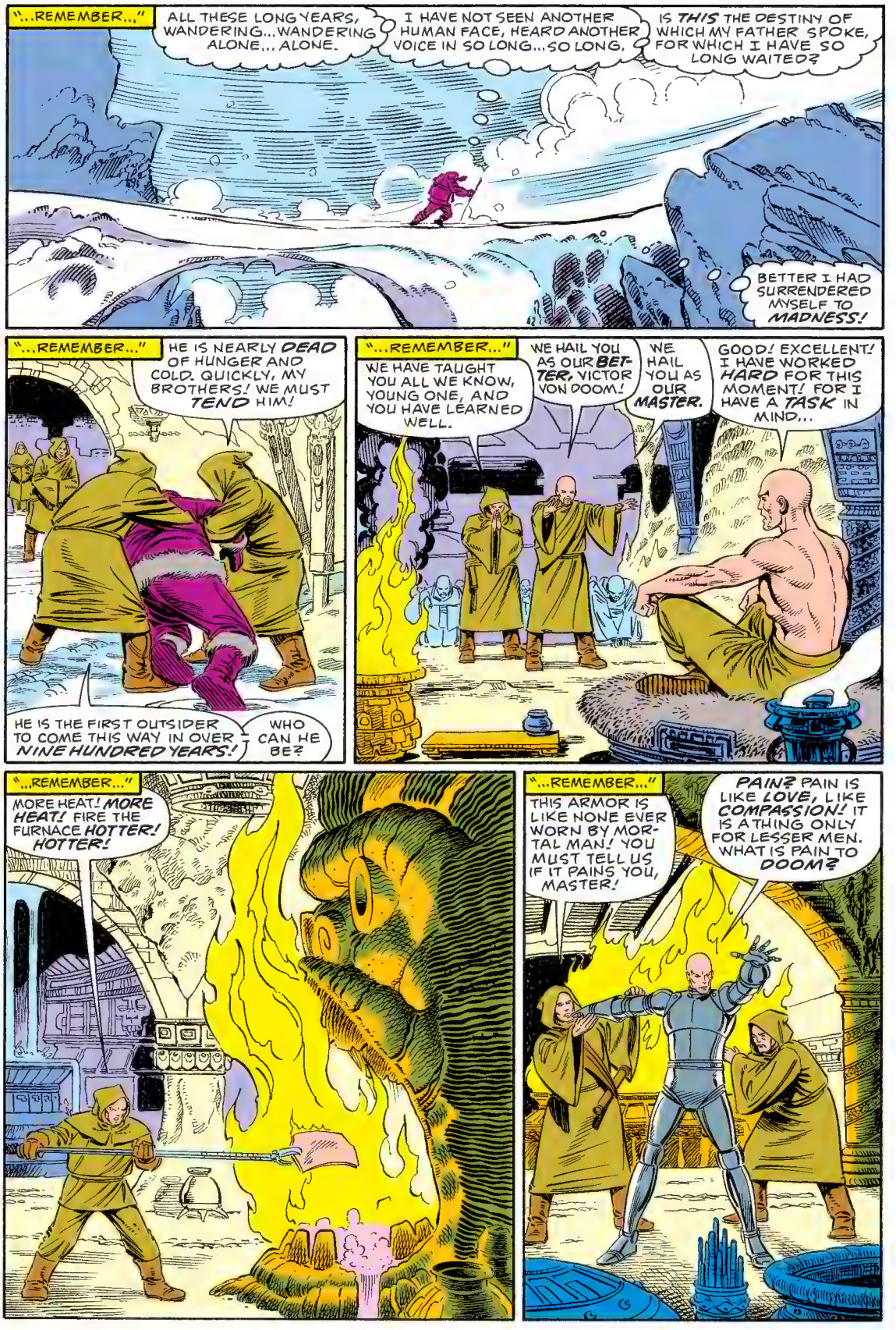

"...REMEMBER..."
"...REMEMBER..."
"...REMEMBER AN AUTUMN DAY IN THE SHADOW OF THE LATVERIAN ALPS, SO MANY YEARS AGO..."
YOU WORRY SO, MY DEAR FRIEND. HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
YOU CANNOT, VALERIA. I WORRY FOR MY FATHER. THE BARON'S MEN TOOK HIM YESTERDAY TO TEND TO THE BARON'S AILING WIFE...
VICTOR!
FATHER! YOU LOOK TERRIBLE! WHAT HAS HAPPENED? THE BARONESS...?
DEAD, MY SON. THE CANCER THAT CONSUMED HER WAS BEYOND EVEN THE HEALING POWERS OF MY POTIONS.
NOW THE BARON BLAMES ME FOR HER DEATH, AND WE MUST FLEE FOR OUR VERY LIVES!
"...REMEMBER THE FLIGHT THROUGH THE FOREST, THE BAYING OF THE HOUNDS SEEMING ALMOST AT YOUR HEELS..."
WHY DO WE RUN LIKE THIS, FATHER? WHY DO WE NOT STAND AND FIGHT?
HOW LIKE YOUR MOTHER YOU SOUND, VICTOR. SHE, TOO, FEARED NOTHING, NO MATTER HOW HOPELESS THE ODDS.
"...REMEMBER THE COLD, HARSH WINTER THAT CLOSED SO QUICKLY AND COMPLETELY OVER THE MOUNTAINS THAT YEAR..."
WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, YOU MUST SURVIVE, MY SON. SURVIVE TO FULFILL YOUR DESTINY!
F-FATHER... I'M SO C-COLD. S-SO C-C-COLD.
"...REMEMBER..."
VON DOOM! IT'S BORIS! THANK GOD I HAVE FOUND YOU!
"...REMEMBER..."
VON DOOM IS DYING. THE BOY IS NEARLY FROZEN, BUT HE HAS A CHANCE.
I MUST GET THEM BACK TO THE CAMP.

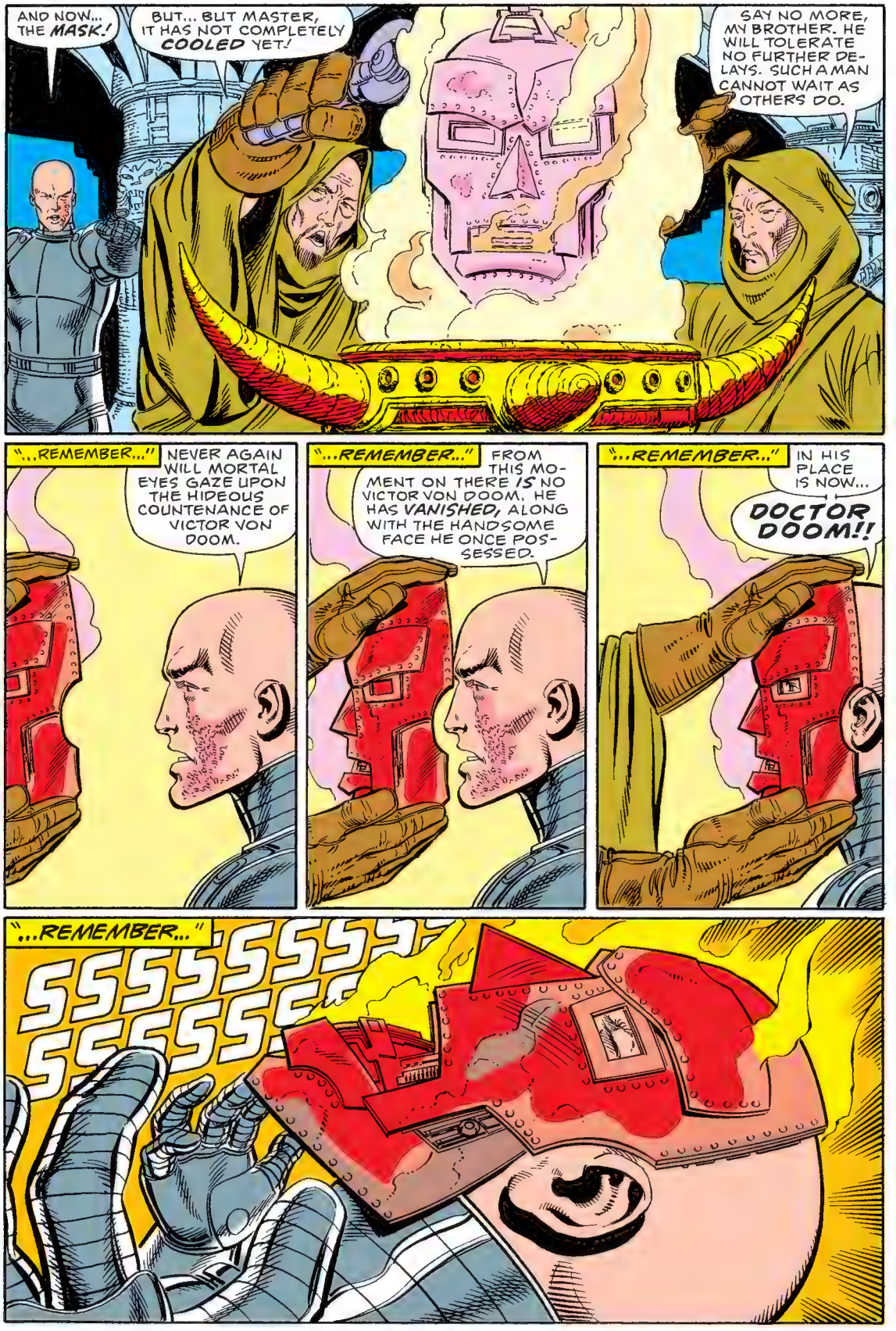
"...REMEMBER...REMEMBER..."
HEED MY LAST WORDS. YOU MUST PROTECT...YOU MUST PROTECT...
...PROTECT...
FATHER! NO ONE WILL HAVE TO PROTECT ME! I SHALL BE STRONG! POWERFUL! I SHALL AVENGE YOUR DEATH. I SWEAR IT!
HE DID NOT MEAN PROTECT THE LAD. HE MEANT THAT THE WORLD WILL NEED PROTECTION FROM THE BOY WHO WEARS THE NAME OF DOOM!
THEY MURDERED MY MOTHER WHEN I WAS BUT A BABE. NOW THEY HAVE KILLED MY FATHER! THEY'LL PAY! ALL OF MANKIND SHALL PAY!!
"...REMEMBER..."
VICTOR...DEAR VICTOR, YOU MUST NOT GRIEVE SO. IT IS NOT HEALTHY. IT HAS BEEN NEARLY A YEAR SINCE YOUR FATHER'S DEATH.
NO, VALERIA. IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN A YEAR. IT HAS BEEN A LIFETIME. A THOUSAND LIFETIMES!
LOOK! LOOK! THESE ARE ALL I HAVE LEFT OF MY FATHER, ALL THAT REMAINS TO SAY THAT ONCE THERE WALKED AND BREATHED A MAN NAMED WERNER VON DOOM.
THESE ANCIENT REMEDIES, HERBS, AND HEALING POTIONS. WHAT GOOD CAN THEY DO ME AS I SEEK MY REVENGE?
"...REMEMBER..."
WAIT! THIS CHEST...THESE STRANGE OBJECTS!
THEY BEAR THE NAME OF CYNTHIA VON DOOM! THE NAME OF MY MOTHER! YET THEY ARE ARTIFACTS OF MAGIC AND SORCERY!
THEN IT IS TRUE! THE WHISPERS, THE STORIES QUICKLY SILENCED WHEN IT WAS REALIZED I MIGHT BE LISTENING! MY MOTHER WAS A WITCH!

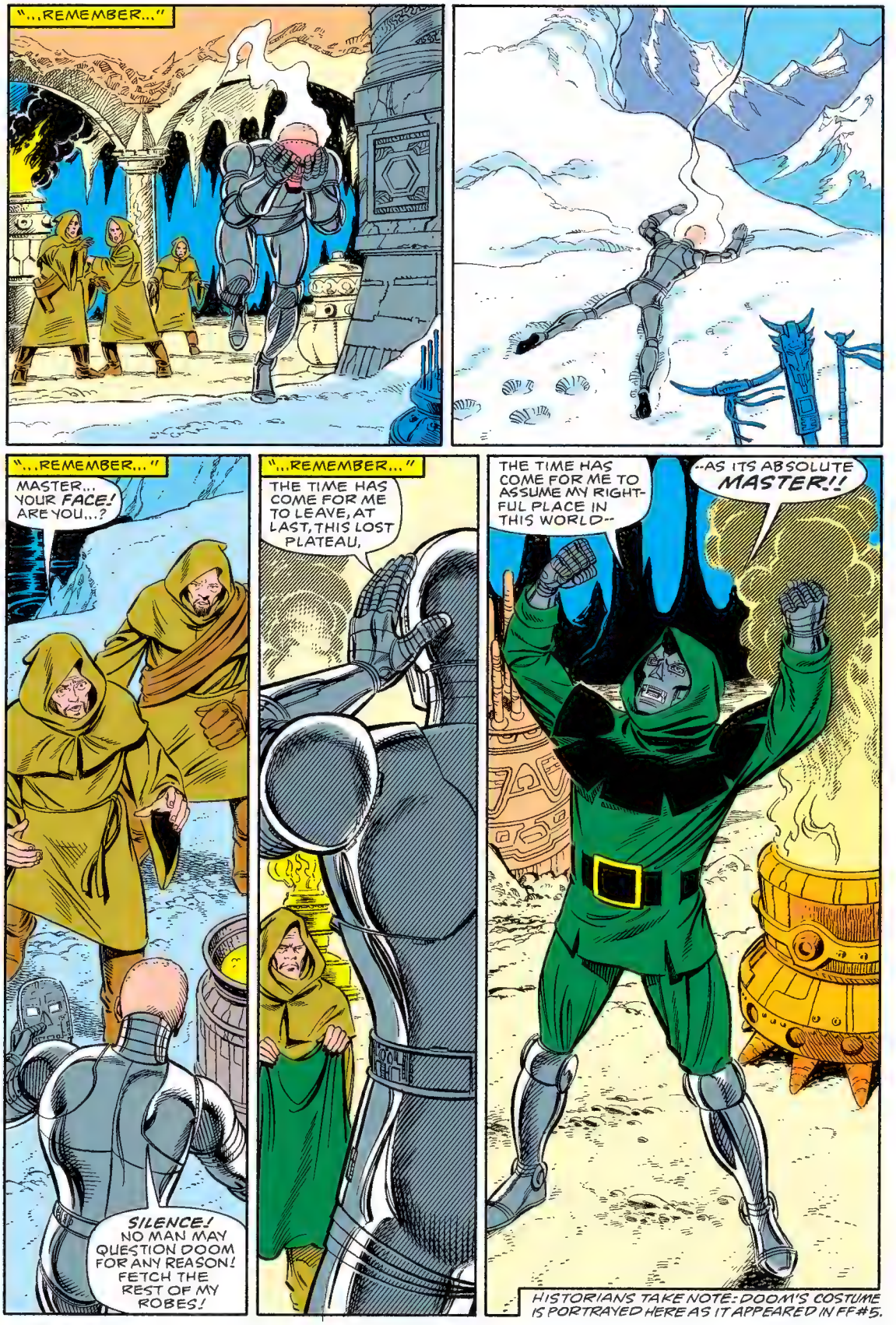
OH, VICTOR, NO! PUT DOWN THOSE BLACK THINGS! IT MUST HAVE BEEN THEM THAT BROUGHT YOUR MOTHER TO HER EARLY DEATH!
OF COURSE! THE PEOPLE HERE-ABOUTS ARE STUPID AND SUPERSTITIOUS. THEY FEAR US BECAUSE WE ARE GYPSIES. HOW MUCH MORE THEY WOULD HAVE FEARED A TRUE WITCH! AS THEY SHALL COME TO FEAR ME!!
"...REMEMBER...REMEMBER THE SLOW AND STEADY MARCH OF THE YEARS...
I GROW STRONGER WITH EACH PASSING DAY. BETTER AND BETTER VERSED IN THE CRAFTS OF DARKNESS! MORE AND EVEN MORE POWERFUL!
VICTOR...?
VICTOR, PLEASE! I BEG YOU! FOR THE SAKE OF THE PROMISES WE MADE EACH OTHER AS CHILDREN.
YOU MUST ABANDON THIS MADNESS. YOU MUST TURN YOUR STEPS BACK TOWARD THE LIGHT!
YOU WASTE YOUR TIME, VALERIA. IT IS TRUE I LOVED YOU ONCE, BUT THOSE DAYS ARE LONG DEAD--AS DEAD AS MY CHILDHOOD DREAMS OF PEACE AND CONTENTMENT.
THERE CAN BE NO PEACE FOR ME NOW, NO DAYS OF SWEET CONTENTMENT, UNTIL THE WORLD IS DRIVEN TO ITS KNEES! NOT UNTIL ALL HUMANITY HAS PAID THE PRICE FOR ITS CRIMES AGAINST THE NAME OF DOOM!
THEN IT IS TRUE. THE MAN I ONCE LOVED... THE MAN WHOSE CHILDREN I ONCE LONGED TO BEAR... IS DEAD.
I...I PITY YOU, POOR, POOR VICTOR.
DO NOT. THE JOYS OF WIFE AND FAMILY ARE FOR LESSER MEN. VICTOR VON DOOM HAS NO NEED OF LOVE, BE IT FROM WOMAN OR CHILD. I AM ABSOLUTE!
ONLY KNOWLEDGE WILL SATISFY ME NOW, VALERIA, FOR ONLY THROUGH MORE AND GREATER KNOWLEDGE CAN I GAIN THE POWER I SEEK, THE TOTAL POWER OVER ALL THAT LIVES.
BUT TO THAT END I MUST ADD TO MY MASTERY OF SORCERY. I MUST FILL MY MIND WITH THE FRUITS OF THE MODERN MAGIC OF SCIENCE.
AND TO THAT END I MUST LEAVE LATVERIA, FOR A WHILE...


"...REMEMBER..."
AND THUS DO I BECOME THE FIRST VON DOOM TO LEAVE BEHIND THE BORDERS OF OUR TINY NATIVE LAND.
I FEEL A GREAT CHILL, A SENSE OF GRIM FORBODING THIS DAY. NO DOUBT IT IS THE VERY PLANET, SHUDDERING DEEP WITHIN ITSELF AS I DRAW CLOSER TO MY ULTIMATE DESTINY!
"...REMEMBER..."
STATE U. THIS HOUSE OF LEARNING IS REPUTED TO BE THE FINEST IN THE LAND, PERHAPS THE WORLD.
GOOD! DOOM WILL ACCEPT NO LESS. DOOM DESERVES NO LESS.
"...REMEMBER..."
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY PRIVATE QUARTERS?
OH, HI. DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME? WE MET ON REGISTRATION DAY. I'M REED RICHARDS,
YOUR DOOR WAS OPEN, AND QUITE FRANKLY, I COULDN'T HELP NOTICING THESE NOTES OF YOURS...
GIVE ME THOSE! GET OUT! DO YOU HEAR? OUT!
OKAY! OKAY! I'M GOING! BUT LISTEN--YOU'RE EXPERIMENTING WITH TRANS-DIMENSIONAL WARPS, AND IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE SOME OF THOSE EQUATIONS MIGHT BE OFF A COUPLE OF DECIMALS...
I SAID GET OUT! MEDDLING FOOL! IF YOU COME SNOOPING AROUND HERE AGAIN, YOU'LL LIVE TO REGRET IT!
HEY...TAKE IT EASY! I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU OUT!
"...REMEMBER..."
"HELP ME OUT!" THE FOOL! DOOM HAS NEED OF NO ONE'S HELP!
I'VE SET UP THE COMPONENTS OF THIS GADGET OF YOURS JUST THE WAY YOU TOLD ME, VON DOOM. BUT I STILL DON'T LIKE IT.
IF THE DEAN EVER FINDS OUT YOU'RE CONDUCTING FORBIDDEN EXPERIMENTS, TRYING TO CONTACT THE NETHER WORLD...

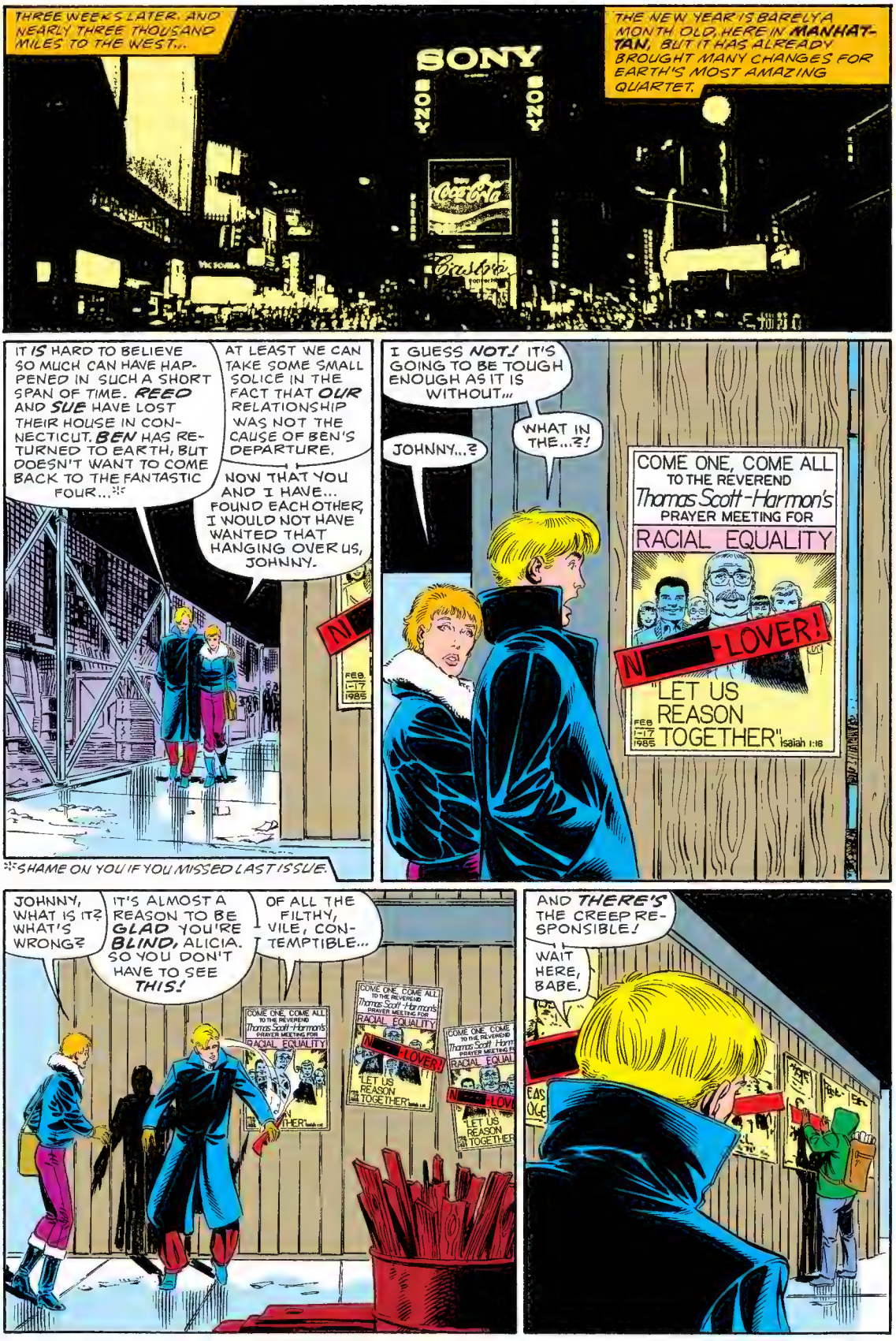
KEEP YOUR SNIVELLING TO YOURSELF, KURTZ. JUST DO WHAT I HAVE INSTRUCTED YOU TO DO!
VERY WELL, VON DOOM. BUT IT'S ON YOUR HEAD IF ANYTHING SHOULD GO WRONG...
"...REMEMBER..."
HOLY COW!
VON DOOM'S QUARTERS!
S.U.
"REMEMBER..."
YOU'RE FINISHED HERE, VON DOOM. HERE AND AT EVERY OTHER SCHOOL IN THIS COUNTRY.
I'M EXPELLING YOU BEFORE YOU DO EVEN GREATER HARM TO YOURSELF OR ANYONE ELSE!
"...REMEMBER..."
THE FOOLS! THERE IS NOTHING MORE I CAN LEARN FROM THEM IN ANY CASE.
BUT...MY FACE. KURTZ ESCAPED WITH ONLY MINOR INJURIES, BUT HE WAS FARTHEST FROM THE BLAST. DARE I HOPE...?
"...REMEMBER..."
NO! NO! I'M UGLY! UGLY! WHAT HAVE I DONE TO MYSELF? WHAT HAVE I DONE? MY FACE IS TOO HORRIBLE. NO OTHER EYES MUST EVER GAZE UPON IT! EVER!!

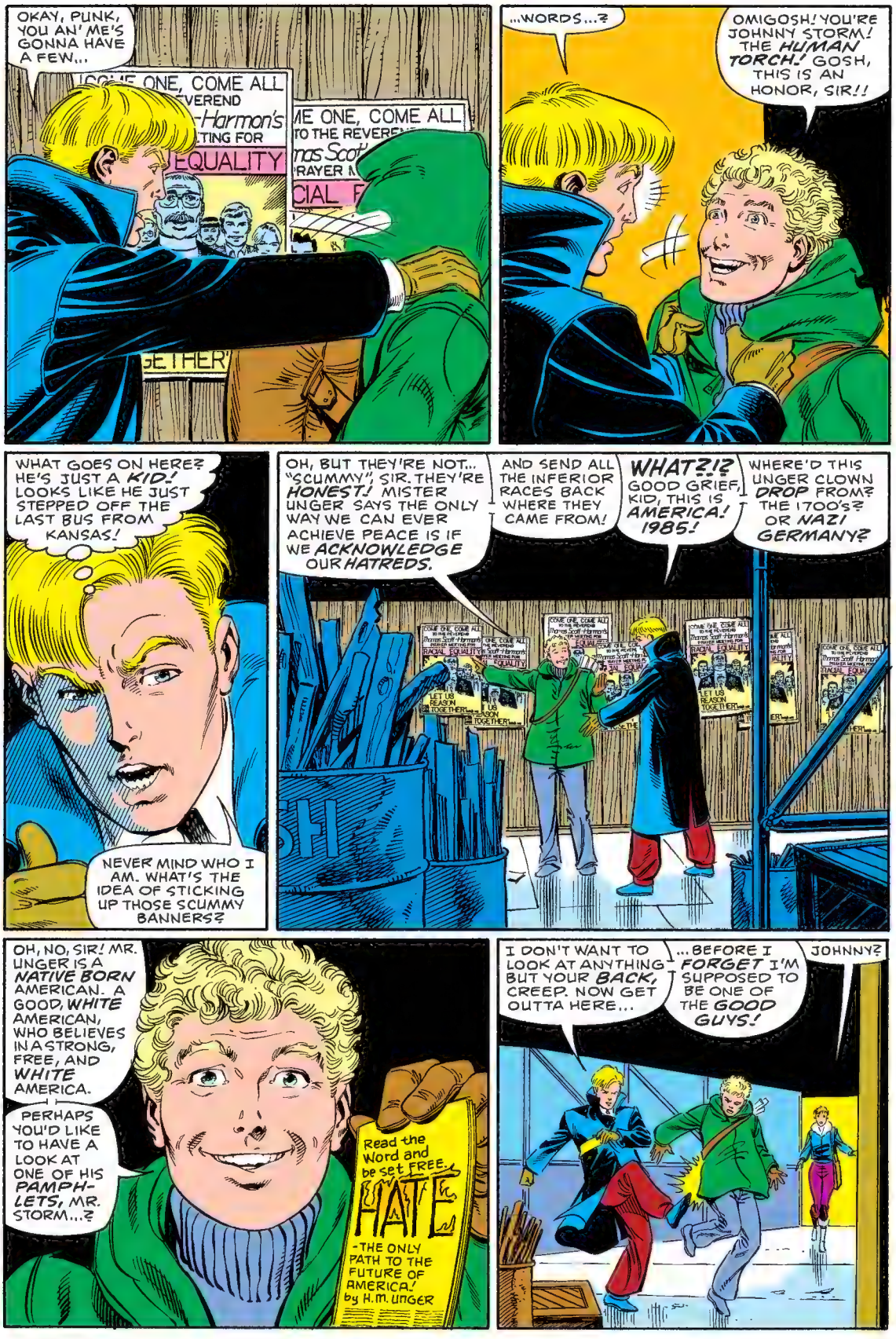

"...REMEMBER..."
ALL THESE LONG YEARS, WANDERING...WANDERING ALONE... ALONE.
I HAVE NOT SEEN ANOTHER HUMAN FACE, HEARD ANOTHER VOICE IN SO LONG...SO LONG.
IS THIS THE DESTINY OF WHICH MY FATHER SPOKE, FOR WHICH I HAVE SO LONG WAITED?
BETTER I HAD SURRENDERED MYSELF TO MADNESS!
"...REMEMBER..."
HE IS NEARLY DEAD OF HUNGER AND COLD. QUICKLY, MY BROTHERS! WE MUST TEND HIM!
HE IS THE FIRST OUTSIDER TO COME THIS WAY IN OVER NINE HUNDRED YEARS!
WHO CAN HE BE?
"...REMEMBER..."
WE HAVE TAUGHT YOU ALL WE KNOW, YOUNG ONE, AND YOU HAVE LEARNED WELL.
WE HAIL YOU AS OUR BETTER, VICTOR VON DOOM!
WE HAIL YOU AS OUR MASTER.
GOOD! EXCELLENT! I HAVE WORKED HARD FOR THIS MOMENT! FOR I HAVE A TASK IN MIND...
"...REMEMBER..."
MORE HEAT! MORE HEAT! FIRE THE FURNACE HOTTER! HOTTER!
"...REMEMBER..."
THIS ARMOR IS LIKE NONE EVER WORN BY MORTAL MAN! YOU MUST TELL US IF IT PAINS YOU, MASTER!
PAIN? PAIN IS LIKE LOVE, LIKE COMPASSION! IT IS A THING ONLY FOR LESSER MEN. WHAT IS PAIN TO DOOM?

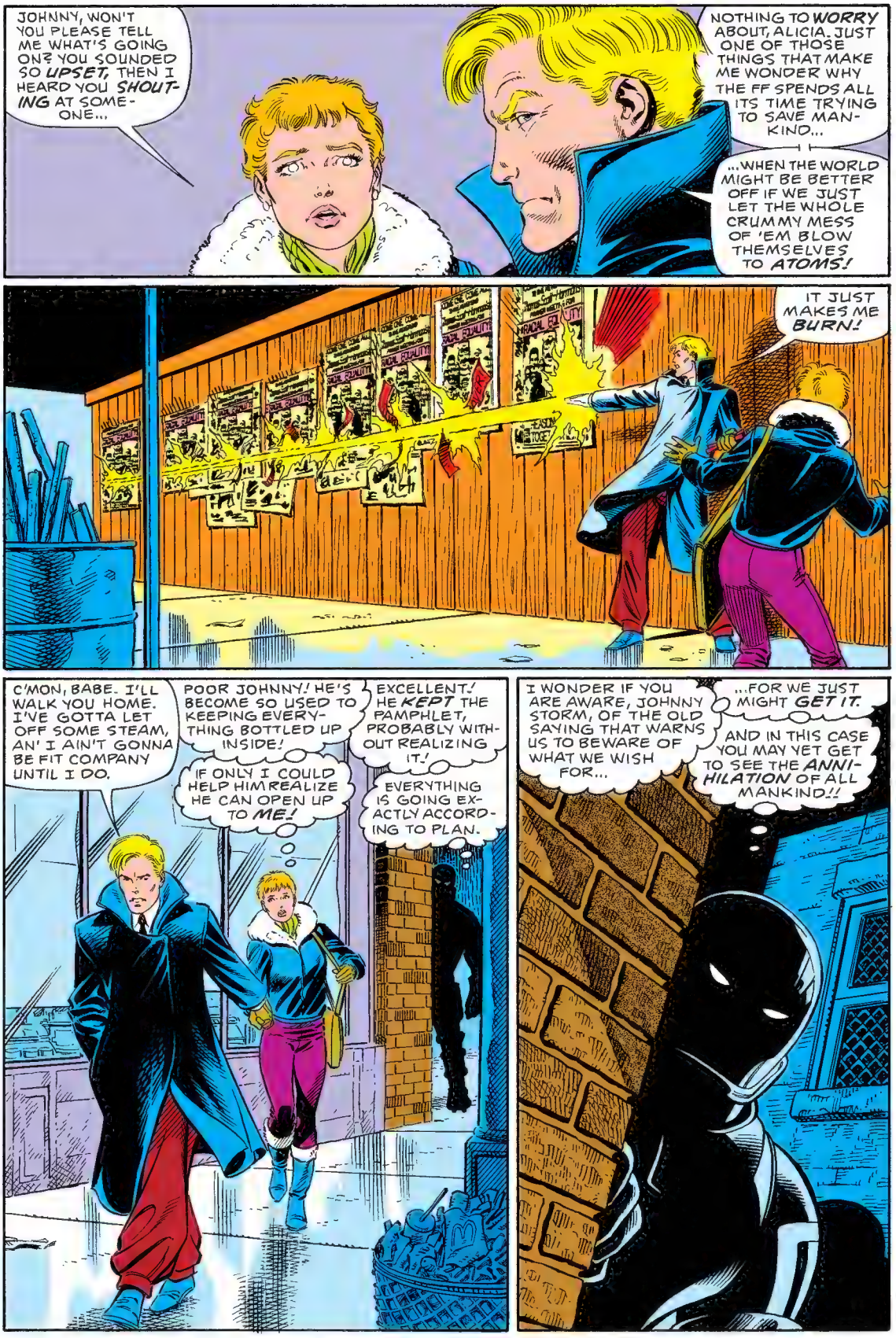

AND NOW... THE MASK!
BUT... BUT MASTER, IT HAS NOT COMPLETELY COOLED YET!
SAY NO MORE, MY BROTHER. HE WILL TOLERATE NO FURTHER DELAYS. SUCH A MAN CANNOT WAIT AS OTHERS DO.
"...REMEMBER..." NEVER AGAIN WILL MORTAL EYES GAZE UPON THE HIDEOUS COUNTENANCE OF VICTOR VON DOOM.
"...REMEMBER..." FROM THIS MOMENT ON THERE IS NO VICTOR VON DOOM. HE HAS VANISHED, ALONG WITH THE HANDSOME FACE HE ONCE POSSESSED.
"...REMEMBER..." IN HIS PLACE IS NOW...
DOCTOR DOOM!!
"...REMEMBER..."
SSSSSSSS
SSSSSSS

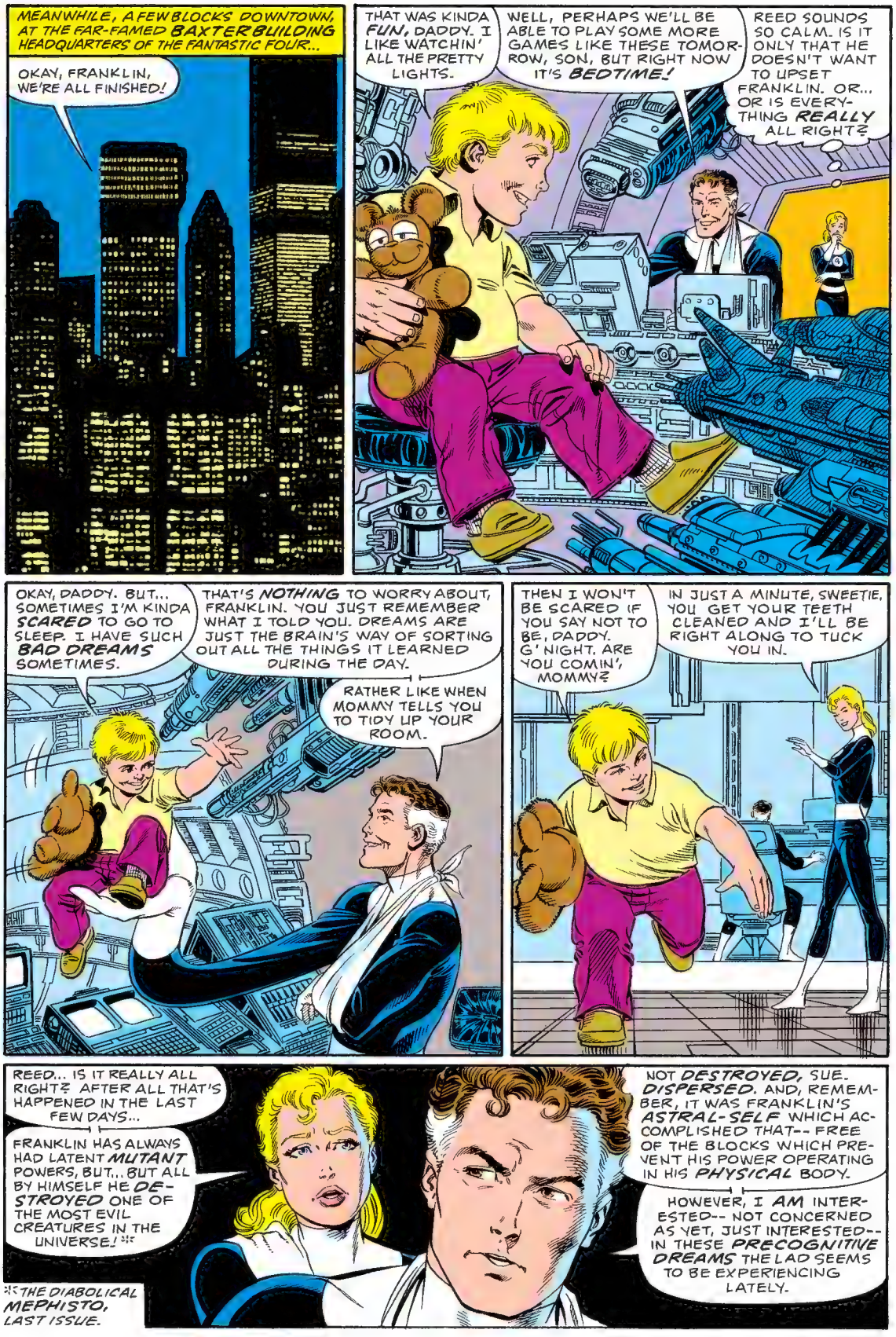

"...REMEMBER..."
"...REMEMBER..."
MASTER... YOUR FACE! ARE YOU...?
SILENCE! NO MAN MAY QUESTION DOOM FOR ANY REASON! FETCH THE REST OF MY ROBES!
"...REMEMBER..."
THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO LEAVE, AT LAST, THIS LOST PLATEAU,
THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO ASSUME MY RIGHT-FUL PLACE IN THIS WORLD--
--AS ITS ABSOLUTE MASTER!!
HISTORIANS TAKE NOTE: DOOM'S COSTUME IS PORTRAYED HERE AS IT APPEARED IN FF#5.

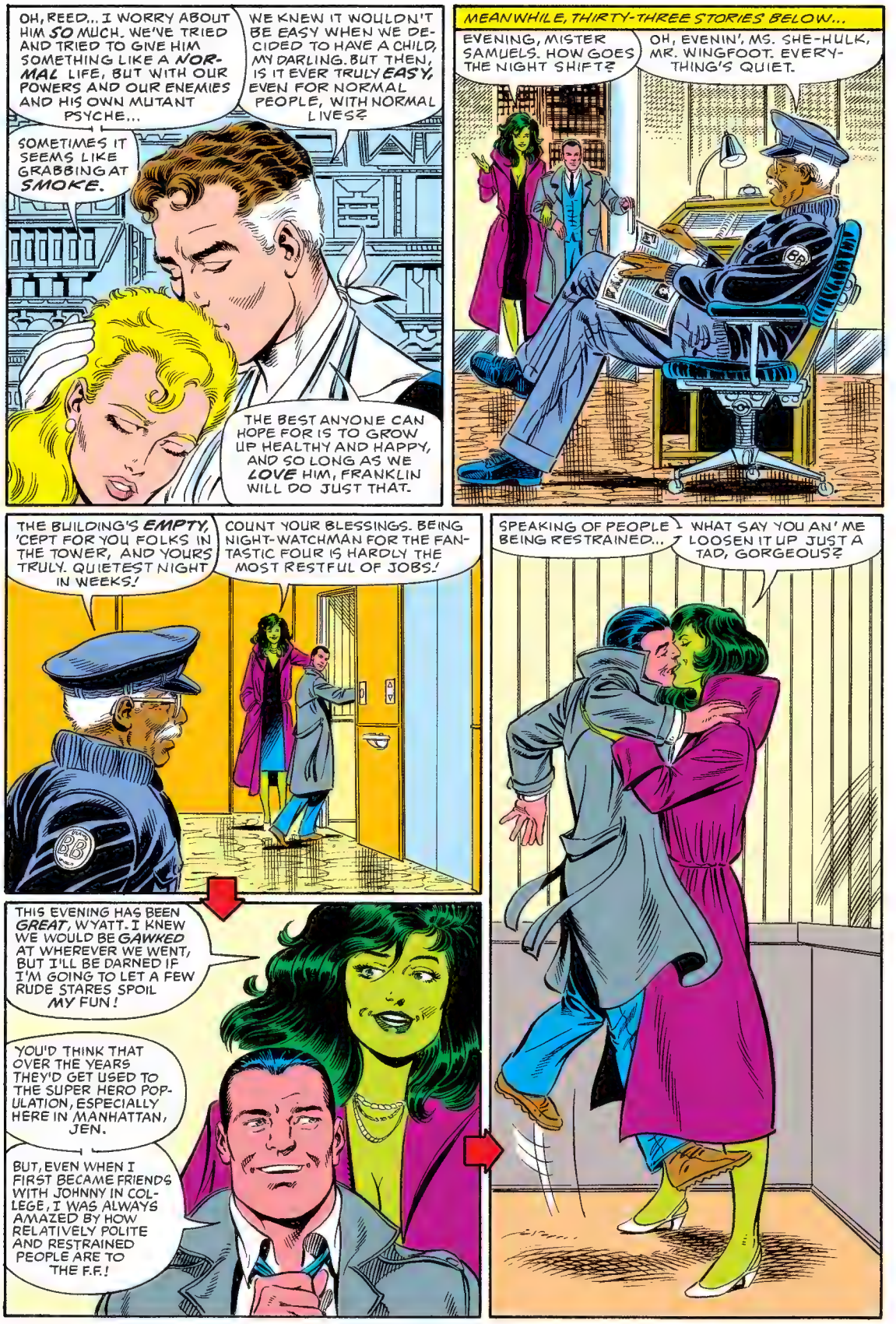
"...REMEMBER... REMEMBER WHO IT WAS WHO STOOD AGAINST YOUR PLANS...
"THE FANTASTIC FOUR, LED BY NONE OTHER THAN REED RICHARDS!
"RICHARDS' TREACHERY COST YOU YOUR FIRST VICTORY...
"THE SECOND TIME, YOU RECRUITED AN ALLY--PRINCE NAMOR OF ATLANTIS, THE SUB-MARINER!
"WITH HIS ASSISTANCE YOU WERE ABLE TO STEAL THE FOURSOME'S HEADQUARTERS, ACTUALLY DRAWING THEM INTO SPACE, BEFORE AGAIN BEING BETRAYED, THIS TIME BY..."
"STOP!"
TERMINATE THE REMEMBRANCER SEQUENCE! HE COMMANDS IT!
IS THE EXO-SUIT AT MAXIMUM FUNCTION?
YES. BUT THE MEMORY-TAPES HAVE NOT COMPLETED THEIR RUN.
I HAVE NO NEED FOR FURTHER MEMORIES.
THE TIME FOR REMEMBERING IS PAST! THE TIME IS NOW RIPE FOR ACTION!
FOR AT LONG LAST I SEE THE FLAW IN MY EARLIER NEAR-PERFECT PLANS. AND BY ELIMINATING THAT FLAW I SHALL AT LAST ACCOMPLISH MY MOST CHERISHED GOAL...
...THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!!

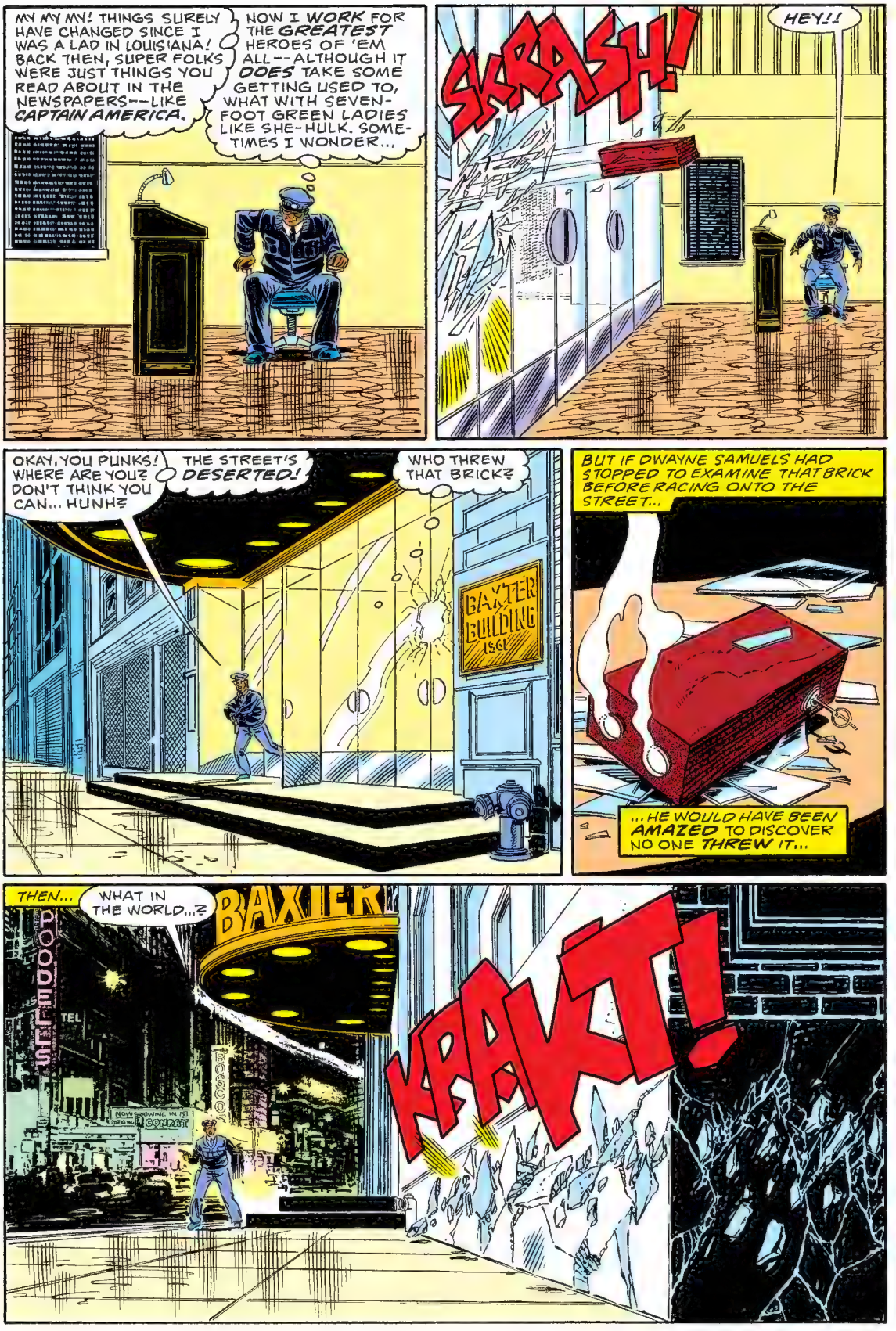

THREE WEEKS LATER. AND NEARLY THREE THOUSAND MILES TO THE WEST...
SONY
SONY
SONY
THE NEW YEAR IS BARELY A MONTH OLD, HERE IN MANHATTAN, BUT IT HAS ALREADY BROUGHT MANY CHANGES FOR EARTH'S MOST AMAZING QUARTET.
IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE SO MUCH CAN HAVE HAPPENED IN SUCH A SHORT SPAN OF TIME. REED AND SUE HAVE LOST THEIR HOUSE IN CONNECTICUT. BEN HAS RETURNED TO EARTH, BUT DOESN'T WANT TO COME BACK TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR...*
AT LEAST WE CAN TAKE SOME SMALL SOLICE IN THE FACT THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WAS NOT THE CAUSE OF BEN'S DEPARTURE.
NOW THAT YOU AND I HAVE... FOUND EACH OTHER, I WOULD NOT HAVE WANTED THAT HANGING OVER US, JOHNNY.
N
FEB 1-17 1985
*SHAME ON YOU IF YOU MISSED LAST ISSUE.
I GUESS NOT! IT'S GOING TO BE TOUGH ENOUGH AS IT IS WITHOUT...
JOHNNY...?
WHAT IN THE...?!
COME ONE, COME ALL TO THE REVEREND Thomas Scott-Harmon's PRAYER MEETING FOR RACIAL EQUALITY
N[redacted]-LOVER!
"LET US REASON TOGETHER" Isaiah 1:18
FEB 1-17 1985
JOHNNY, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S ALMOST A REASON TO BE GLAD YOU'RE BLIND, ALICIA. SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE THIS!
OF ALL THE FILTHY, VILE, CONTEMPTIBLE...
AND THERE'S THE CREEP RESPONSIBLE!
WAIT HERE, BABE.

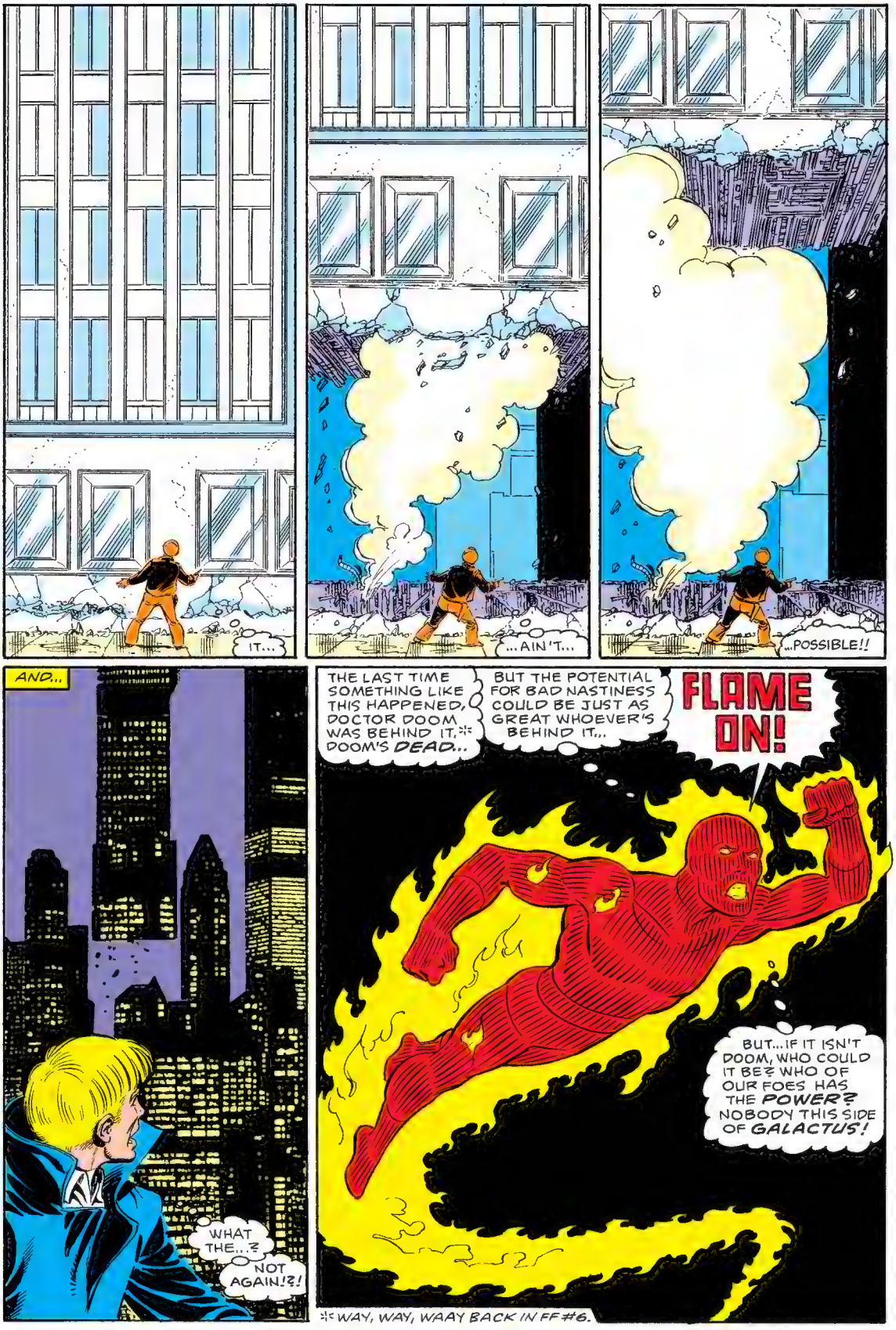

OKAY, PUNK, YOU AN' ME'S GONNA HAVE A FEW...
...WORDS...?
OMIGOSH! YOU'RE JOHNNY STORM! THE HUMAN TORCH! GOSH, THIS IS AN HONOR, SIR!!
WHAT GOES ON HERE? HE'S JUST A KID! LOOKS LIKE HE JUST STEPPED OFF THE LAST BUS FROM KANSAS!
NEVER MIND WHO I AM. WHAT'S THE IDEA OF STICKING UP THOSE SCUMMY BANNERS?
OH, BUT THEY'RE NOT... "SCUMMY", SIR. THEY'RE HONEST! MISTER UNGER SAYS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN EVER ACHIEVE PEACE IS IF WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR HATREDS.
AND SEND ALL THE INFERIOR RACES BACK WHERE THEY CAME FROM!
WHAT?!? GOOD GRIEF, KID, THIS IS AMERICA! 1985!
WHERE'D THIS UNGER CLOWN DROP FROM? THE 1700'S? OR NAZI GERMANY?
OH, NO, SIR! MR. UNGER IS A NATIVE BORN AMERICAN. A GOOD, WHITE AMERICAN, WHO BELIEVES IN A STRONG, FREE, AND WHITE AMERICA.
PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK AT ONE OF HIS PAMPH-LETS, MR. STORM...?
Read the Word and be set FREE.
HATE
-THE ONLY PATH TO THE FUTURE OF AMERICA! by H.M. UNGER
I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT ANYTHING BUT YOUR BACK, CREEP. NOW GET OUTTA HERE...
...BEFORE I FORGET I'M SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS!
JOHNNY?


JOHNNY, WON'T YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU SOUNDED SO UPSET, THEN I HEARD YOU SHOUTING AT SOMEONE...
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, ALICIA. JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT MAKE ME WONDER WHY THE FF SPENDS ALL ITS TIME TRYING TO SAVE MANKIND...
...WHEN THE WORLD MIGHT BE BETTER OFF IF WE JUST LET THE WHOLE CRUMMY MESS OF 'EM BLOW THEMSELVES TO ATOMS!
IT JUST MAKES ME BURN!
C'MON, BABE. I'LL WALK YOU HOME. I'VE GOTTA LET OFF SOME STEAM, AN' I AIN'T GONNA BE FIT COMPANY UNTIL I DO.
POOR JOHNNY! HE'S BECOME SO USED TO KEEPING EVERYTHING BOTTLED UP INSIDE!
IF ONLY I COULD HELP HIM REALIZE HE CAN OPEN UP TO ME!
EXCELLENT! HE KEPT THE PAMPHLET, PROBABLY WITHOUT REALIZING IT!
EVERYTHING IS GOING EXACTLY ACCORDING TO PLAN.
I WONDER IF YOU ARE AWARE, JOHNNY STORM, OF THE OLD SAYING THAT WARNS US TO BEWARE OF WHAT WE WISH FOR...
...FOR WE JUST MIGHT GET IT.
AND IN THIS CASE YOU MAY YET GET TO SEE THE ANNIHILATION OF ALL MANKIND!!

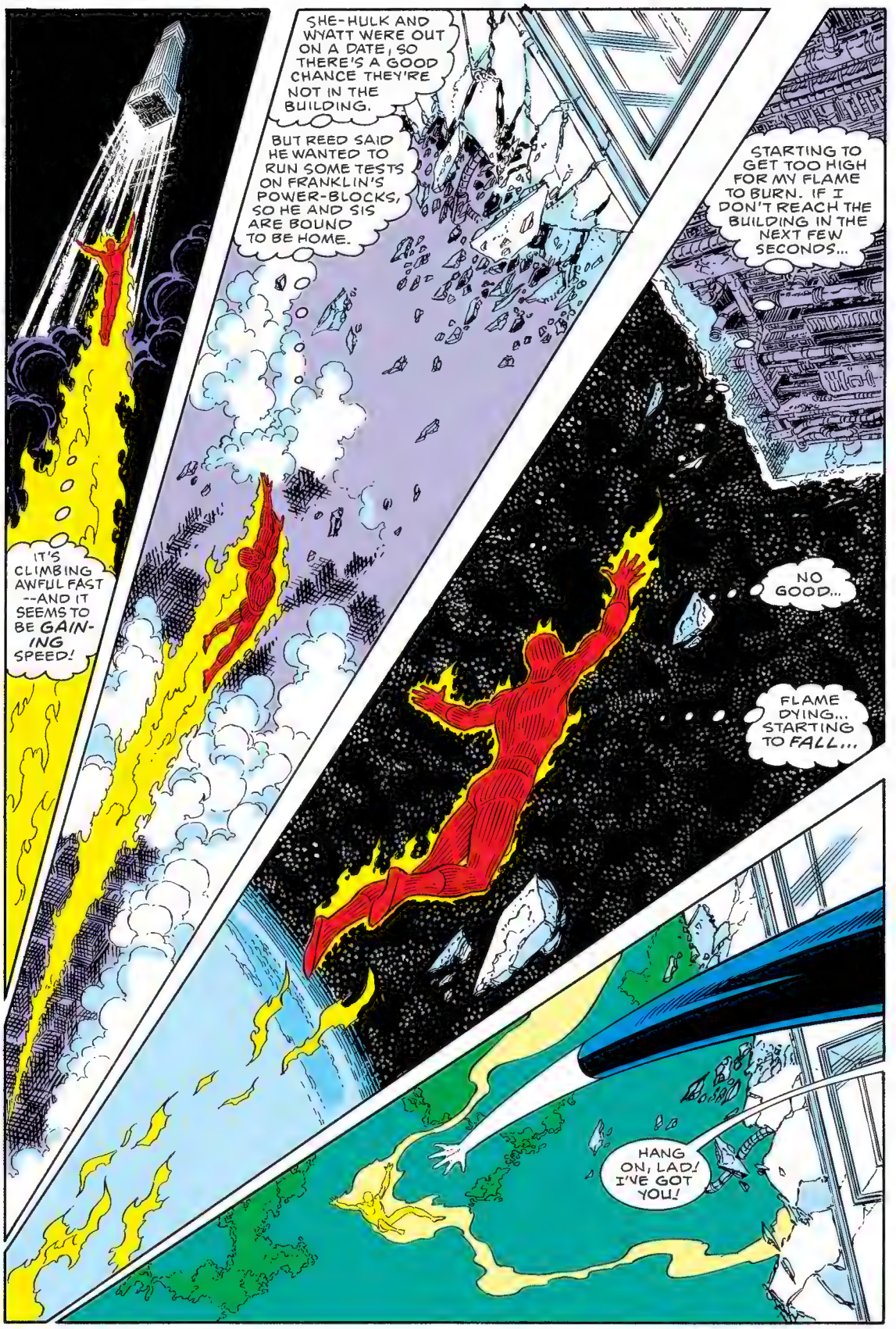

MEANWHILE, A FEW BLOCKS DOWNTOWN, AT THE FAR-FAMED BAXTER BUILDING HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...
OKAY, FRANKLIN, WE'RE ALL FINISHED!
THAT WAS KINDA FUN, DADDY. I LIKE WATCHIN' ALL THE PRETTY LIGHTS.
WELL, PERHAPS WE'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY SOME MORE GAMES LIKE THESE TOMORROW, SON, BUT RIGHT NOW IT'S BEDTIME!
REED SOUNDS SO CALM. IS IT ONLY THAT HE DOESN'T WANT TO UPSET FRANKLIN. OR... OR IS EVERYTHING REALLY ALL RIGHT?
OKAY, DADDY. BUT... SOMETIMES I'M KINDA SCARED TO GO TO SLEEP. I HAVE SUCH BAD DREAMS SOMETIMES.
THAT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, FRANKLIN. YOU JUST REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU. DREAMS ARE JUST THE BRAIN'S WAY OF SORTING OUT ALL THE THINGS IT LEARNED DURING THE DAY.
RATHER LIKE WHEN MOMMY TELLS YOU TO TIDY UP YOUR ROOM.
THEN I WON'T BE SCARED IF YOU SAY NOT TO BE, DADDY. G' NIGHT. ARE YOU COMIN', MOMMY?
IN JUST A MINUTE, SWEETIE, YOU GET YOUR TEETH CLEANED AND I'LL BE RIGHT ALONG TO TUCK YOU IN.
REED... IS IT REALLY ALL RIGHT? AFTER ALL THAT'S HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW DAYS...
FRANKLIN HAS ALWAYS HAD LATENT MUTANT POWERS, BUT... BUT ALL BY HIMSELF HE DESTROYED ONE OF THE MOST EVIL CREATURES IN THE UNIVERSE! *
NOT DESTROYED, SUE. DISPERSED. AND, REMEMBER, IT WAS FRANKLIN'S ASTRAL-SELF WHICH ACCOMPLISHED THAT-- FREE OF THE BLOCKS WHICH PREVENT HIS POWER OPERATING IN HIS PHYSICAL BODY.
HOWEVER, I AM INTERESTED-- NOT CONCERNED AS YET, JUST INTERESTED-- IN THESE PRECOGNITIVE DREAMS THE LAD SEEMS TO BE EXPERIENCING LATELY.
* THE DIABOLICAL MEPHISTO, LAST ISSUE.

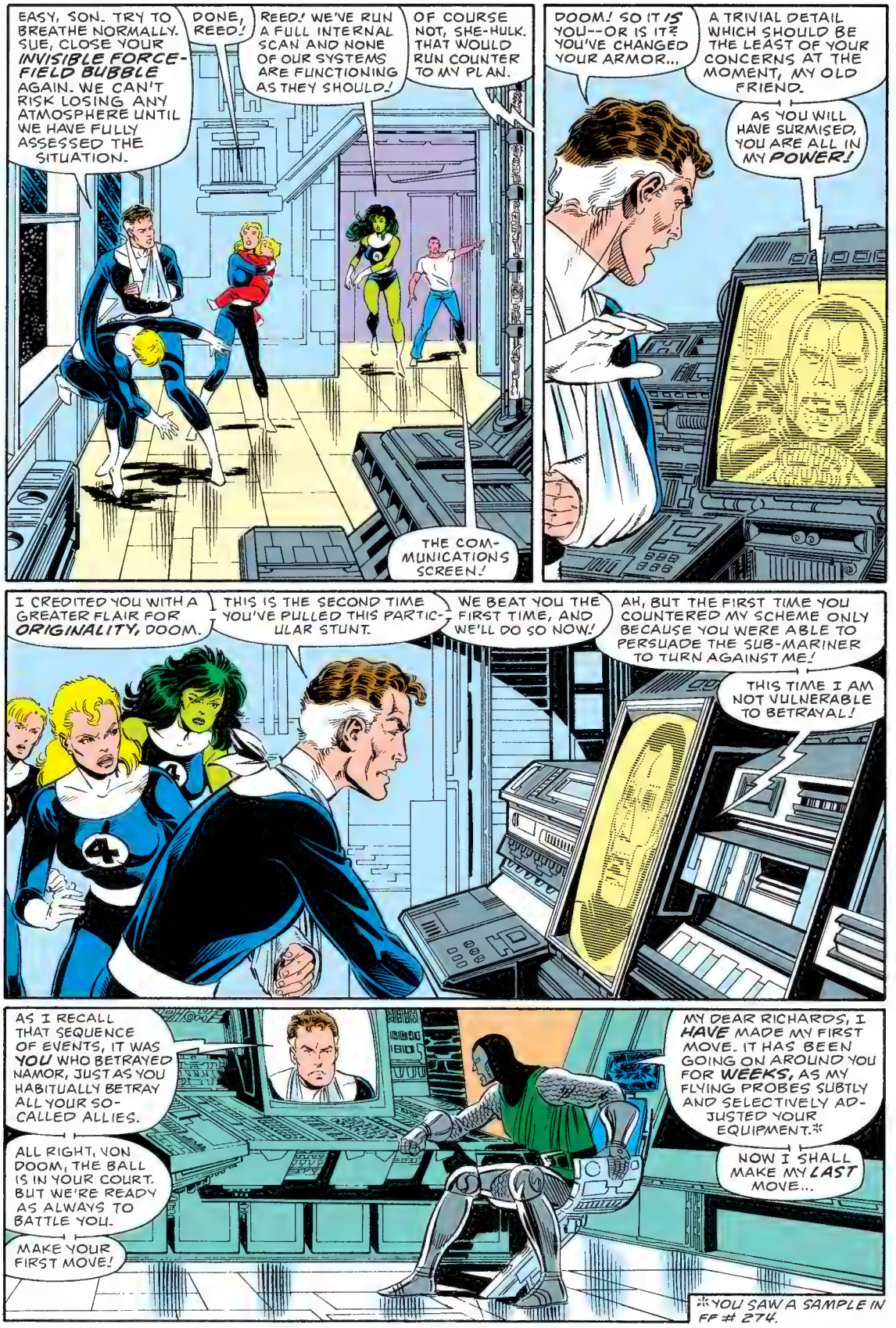

OH, REED... I WORRY ABOUT HIM SO MUCH. WE'VE TRIED AND TRIED TO GIVE HIM SOMETHING LIKE A NORMAL LIFE, BUT WITH OUR POWERS AND OUR ENEMIES AND HIS OWN MUTANT PSYCHE...
WE KNEW IT WOULDN'T BE EASY WHEN WE DECIDED TO HAVE A CHILD, MY DARLING. BUT THEN, IS IT EVER TRULY EASY, EVEN FOR NORMAL PEOPLE, WITH NORMAL LIVES?
SOMETIMES IT SEEMS LIKE GRABBING AT SMOKE.
THE BEST ANYONE CAN HOPE FOR IS TO GROW UP HEALTHY AND HAPPY, AND SO LONG AS WE LOVE HIM, FRANKLIN WILL DO JUST THAT.
MEANWHILE, THIRTY-THREE STORIES BELOW...
EVENING, MISTER SAMUELS. HOW GOES THE NIGHT SHIFT?
OH, EVENIN', MS. SHE-HULK, MR. WINGFOOT. EVERYTHING'S QUIET.
THE BUILDING'S EMPTY, 'CEPT FOR YOU FOLKS IN THE TOWER, AND YOURS TRULY. QUIETEST NIGHT IN WEEKS!
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS. BEING NIGHT-WATCHMAN FOR THE FANTASTIC FOUR IS HARDLY THE MOST RESTFUL OF JOBS!
THIS EVENING HAS BEEN GREAT, WYATT. I KNEW WE WOULD BE GAWKED AT WHEREVER WE WENT, BUT I'LL BE DARNED IF I'M GOING TO LET A FEW RUDE STARES SPOIL MY FUN!
YOU'D THINK THAT OVER THE YEARS THEY'D GET USED TO THE SUPER HERO POPULATION, ESPECIALLY HERE IN MANHATTAN, JEN.
BUT, EVEN WHEN I FIRST BECAME FRIENDS WITH JOHNNY IN COLLEGE, I WAS ALWAYS AMAZED BY HOW RELATIVELY POLITE AND RESTRAINED PEOPLE ARE TO THE F.F.!
SPEAKING OF PEOPLE BEING RESTRAINED...
WHAT SAY YOU AN' ME LOOSEN IT UP JUST A TAD, GORGEOUS?

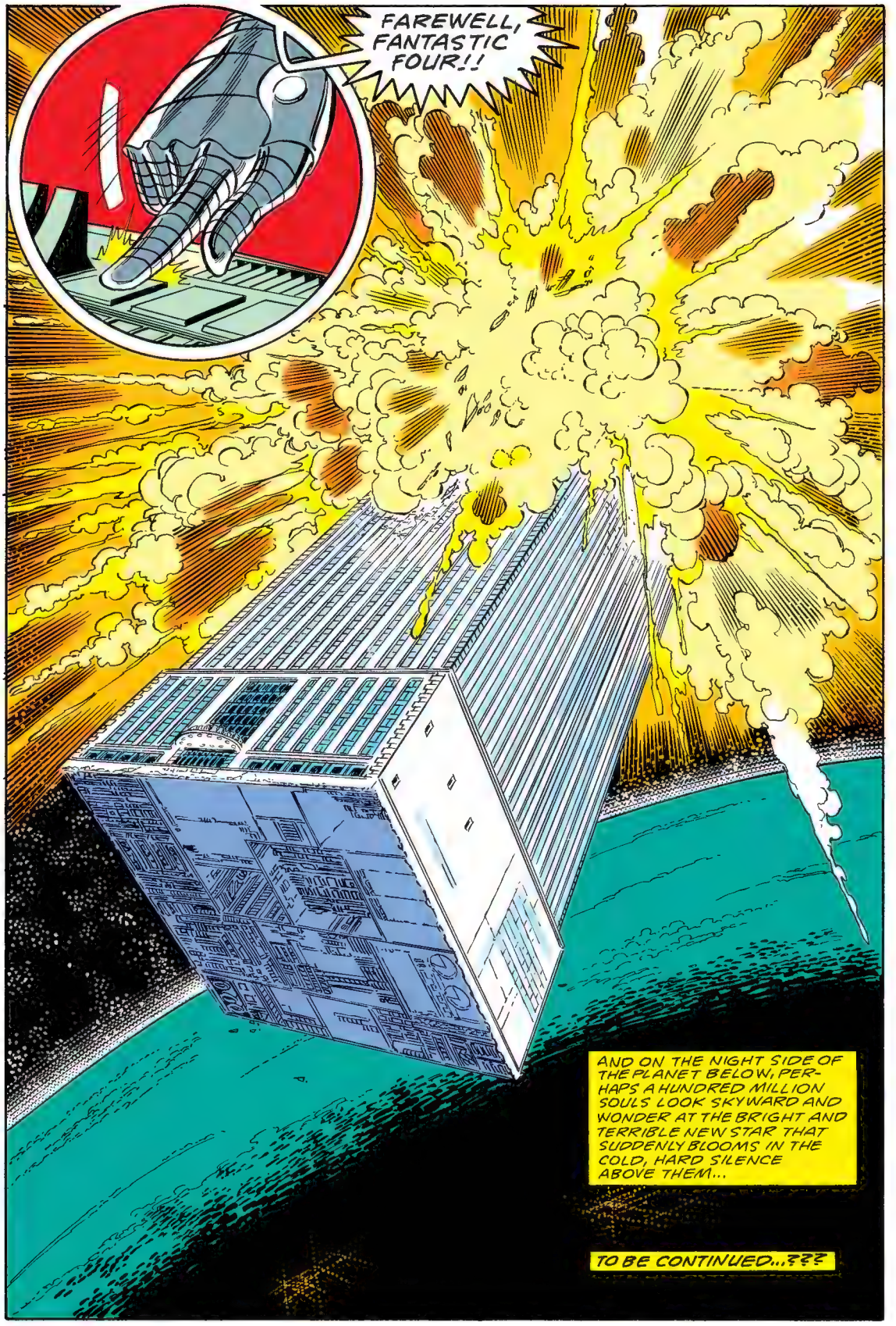

MY MY MY! THINGS SURELY HAVE CHANGED SINCE I WAS A LAD IN LOUISIANA! BACK THEN, SUPER FOLKS WERE JUST THINGS YOU READ ABOUT IN THE NEWSPAPERS--LIKE CAPTAIN AMERICA.
NOW I WORK FOR THE GREATEST HEROES OF 'EM ALL--ALTHOUGH IT DOES TAKE SOME GETTING USED TO, WHAT WITH SEVEN-FOOT GREEN LADIES LIKE SHE-HULK. SOMETIMES I WONDER...
SKRASH!
HEY!!
OKAY, YOU PUNKS! WHERE ARE YOU? DON'T THINK YOU CAN... HUNH?
THE STREET'S DESERTED!
WHO THREW THAT BRICK?
BAXTER BUILDING
BUT IF DWAYNE SAMUELS HAD STOPPED TO EXAMINE THAT BRICK BEFORE RACING ONTO THE STREET...
...HE WOULD HAVE BEEN AMAZED TO DISCOVER NO ONE THREW IT...
THEN...
WHAT IN THE WORLD...?
BAXTER
KRAKT!


IT...
...AIN'T...
...POSSIBLE!!
AND...
WHAT THE...?
NOT AGAIN!?!
THE LAST TIME SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED, DOCTOR DOOM WAS BEHIND IT,* DOOM'S DEAD...
BUT THE POTENTIAL FOR BAD NASTINESS COULD BE JUST AS GREAT WHOEVER'S BEHIND IT...
FLAME ON!
BUT...IF IT ISN'T DOOM, WHO COULD IT BE? WHO OF OUR FOES HAS THE POWER? NOBODY THIS SIDE OF GALACTUS!

*WAY, WAY, WAAY BACK IN FF #6.


IT'S CLIMBING AWFUL FAST --AND IT SEEMS TO BE GAIN-ING SPEED!
SHE-HULK AND WYATT WERE OUT ON A DATE, SO THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THEY'RE NOT IN THE BUILDING.
BUT REED SAID HE WANTED TO RUN SOME TESTS ON FRANKLIN'S POWER-BLOCKS, SO HE AND SIS ARE BOUND TO BE HOME.
STARTING TO GET TOO HIGH FOR MY FLAME TO BURN. IF I DON'T REACH THE BUILDING IN THE NEXT FEW SECONDS...
NO GOOD...
FLAME DYING... STARTING TO FALL...
HANG ON, LAD! I'VE GOT YOU!


EASY, SON. TRY TO BREATHE NORMALLY. SUE, CLOSE YOUR *INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD BUBBLE* AGAIN. WE CAN'T RISK LOSING ANY ATMOSPHERE UNTIL WE HAVE FULLY ASSESSED THE SITUATION.
DONE, REED!
REED! WE'VE RUN A FULL INTERNAL SCAN AND NONE OF OUR SYSTEMS ARE FUNCTIONING AS THEY SHOULD!
OF COURSE NOT, SHE-HULK. THAT WOULD RUN COUNTER TO MY PLAN.
THE COM-MUNICATIONS SCREEN!
DOOM! SO IT *IS* YOU--OR IS IT? YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR ARMOR...
A TRIVIAL DETAIL WHICH SHOULD BE THE LEAST OF YOUR CONCERNS AT THE MOMENT, MY OLD FRIEND.
AS YOU WILL HAVE SURMISED, YOU ARE ALL IN MY *POWER!*
I CREDITED YOU WITH A GREATER FLAIR FOR *ORIGINALITY,* DOOM.
THIS IS THE SECOND TIME YOU'VE PULLED THIS PARTICULAR STUNT.
WE BEAT YOU THE FIRST TIME, AND WE'LL DO SO NOW!
AH, BUT THE FIRST TIME YOU COUNTERED MY SCHEME ONLY BECAUSE YOU WERE ABLE TO PERSUADE THE SUB-MARINER TO TURN AGAINST ME!
THIS TIME I AM NOT VULNERABLE TO BETRAYAL!
AS I RECALL THAT SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, IT WAS *YOU* WHO BETRAYED NAMOR, JUST AS YOU HABITUALLY BETRAY ALL YOUR SO-CALLED ALLIES.
ALL RIGHT, VON DOOM, THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT. BUT WE'RE READY AS ALWAYS TO BATTLE YOU.
MAKE YOUR FIRST MOVE!
MY DEAR RICHARDS, I *HAVE* MADE MY FIRST MOVE. IT HAS BEEN GOING ON AROUND YOU FOR *WEEKS,* AS MY FLYING PROBES SUBTLY AND SELECTIVELY ADJUSTED YOUR EQUIPMENT.*
NOW I SHALL MAKE MY *LAST* MOVE...
*YOU SAW A SAMPLE IN FF # 274.


FAREWELL, FANTASTIC FOUR!!
AND ON THE NIGHT SIDE OF THE PLANET BELOW, PERHAPS A HUNDRED MILLION SOULS LOOK SKYWARD AND WONDER AT THE BRIGHT AND TERRIBLE NEW STAR THAT SUDDENLY BLOOMS IN THE COLD, HARD SILENCE ABOVE THEM...
TO BE CONTINUED...???

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DOOMSDAY PLUS ONE!
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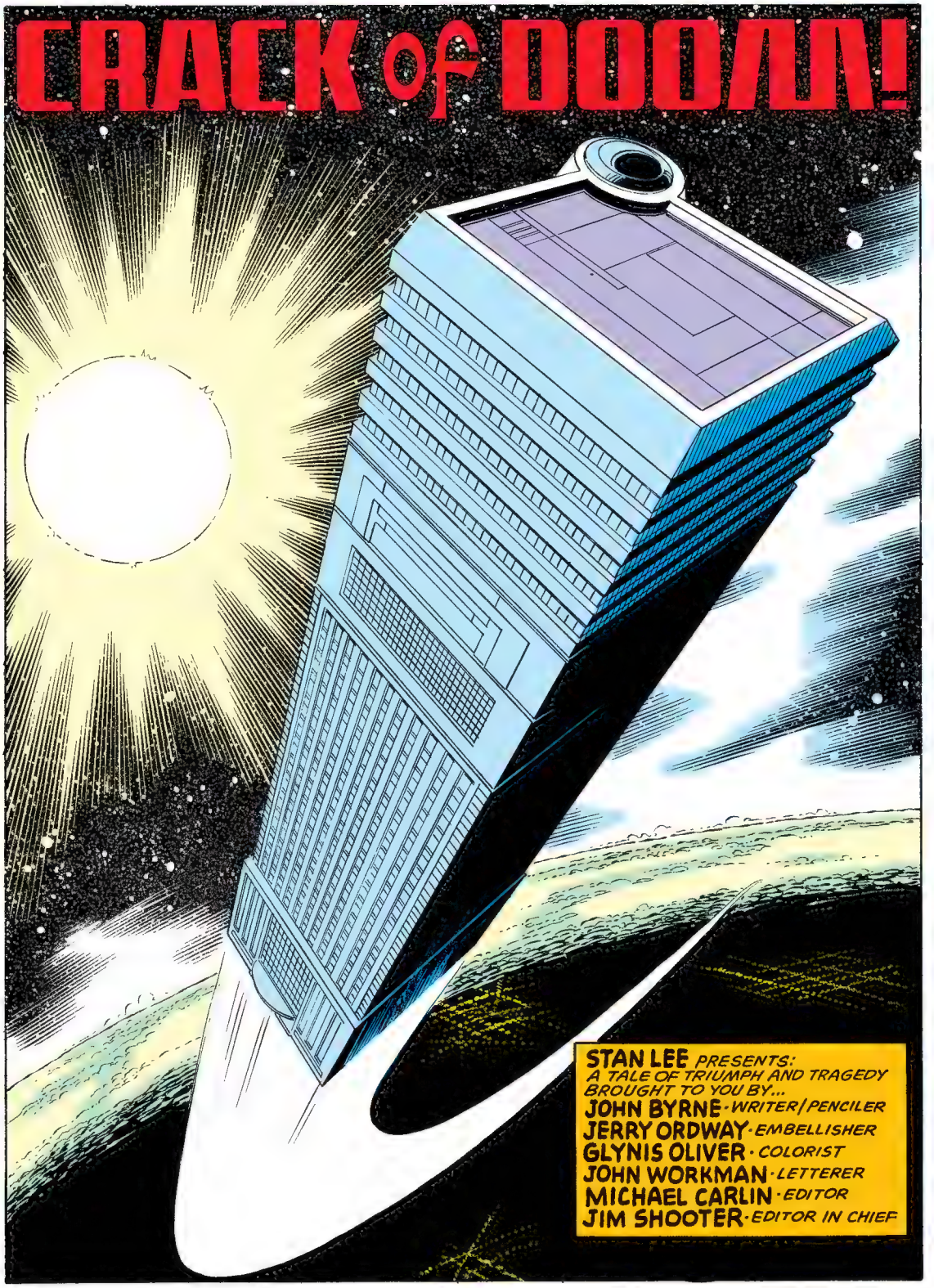
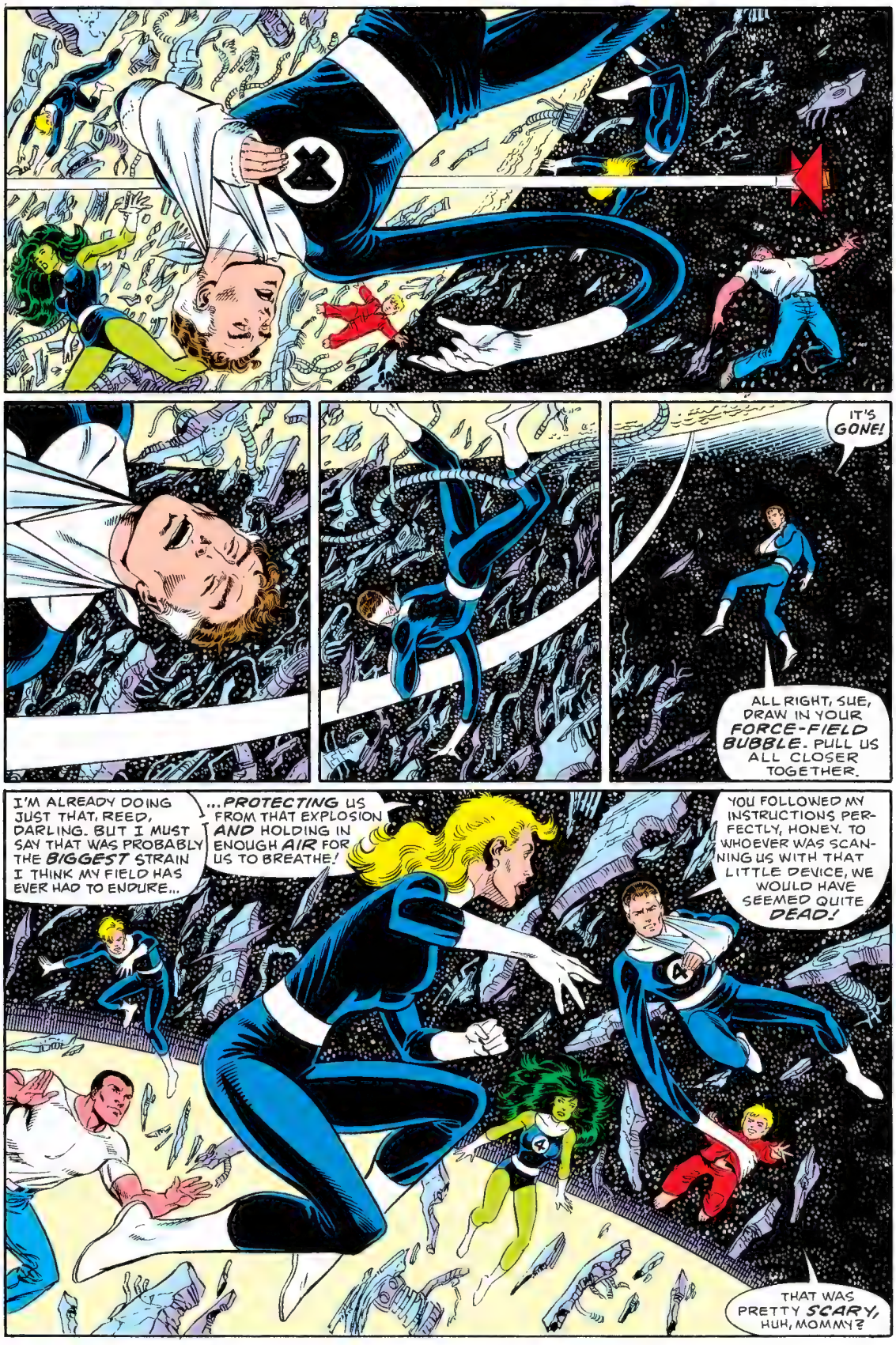
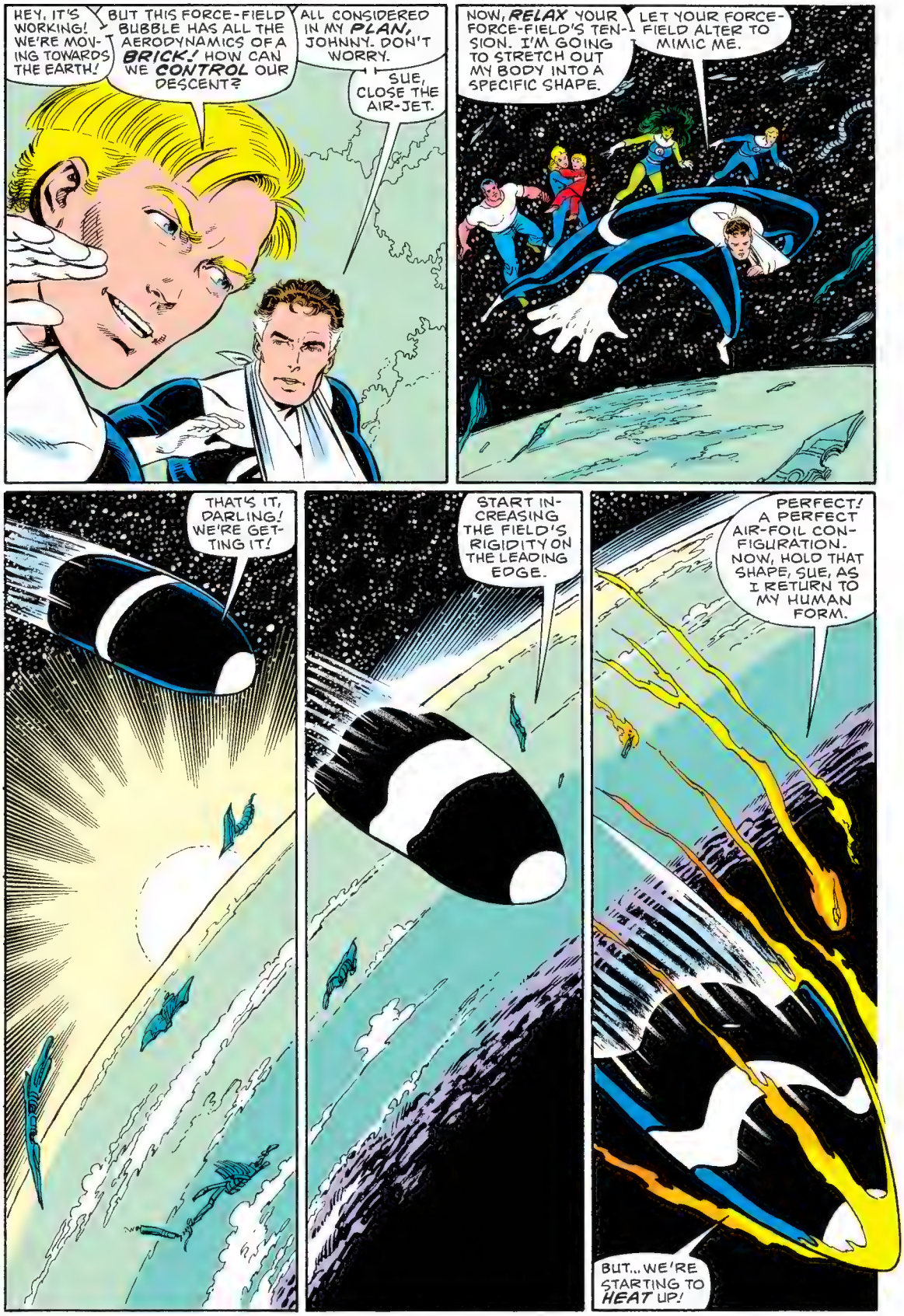

CRACK of DOOM!
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
A TALE OF TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY
BROUGHT TO YOU BY...
JOHN BYRNE · WRITER/PENCILER
JERRY ORDWAY · EMBELLISHER
GLYNIS OLIVER · COLORIST
JOHN WORKMAN · LETTERER
MICHAEL CARLIN · EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER · EDITOR IN CHIEF

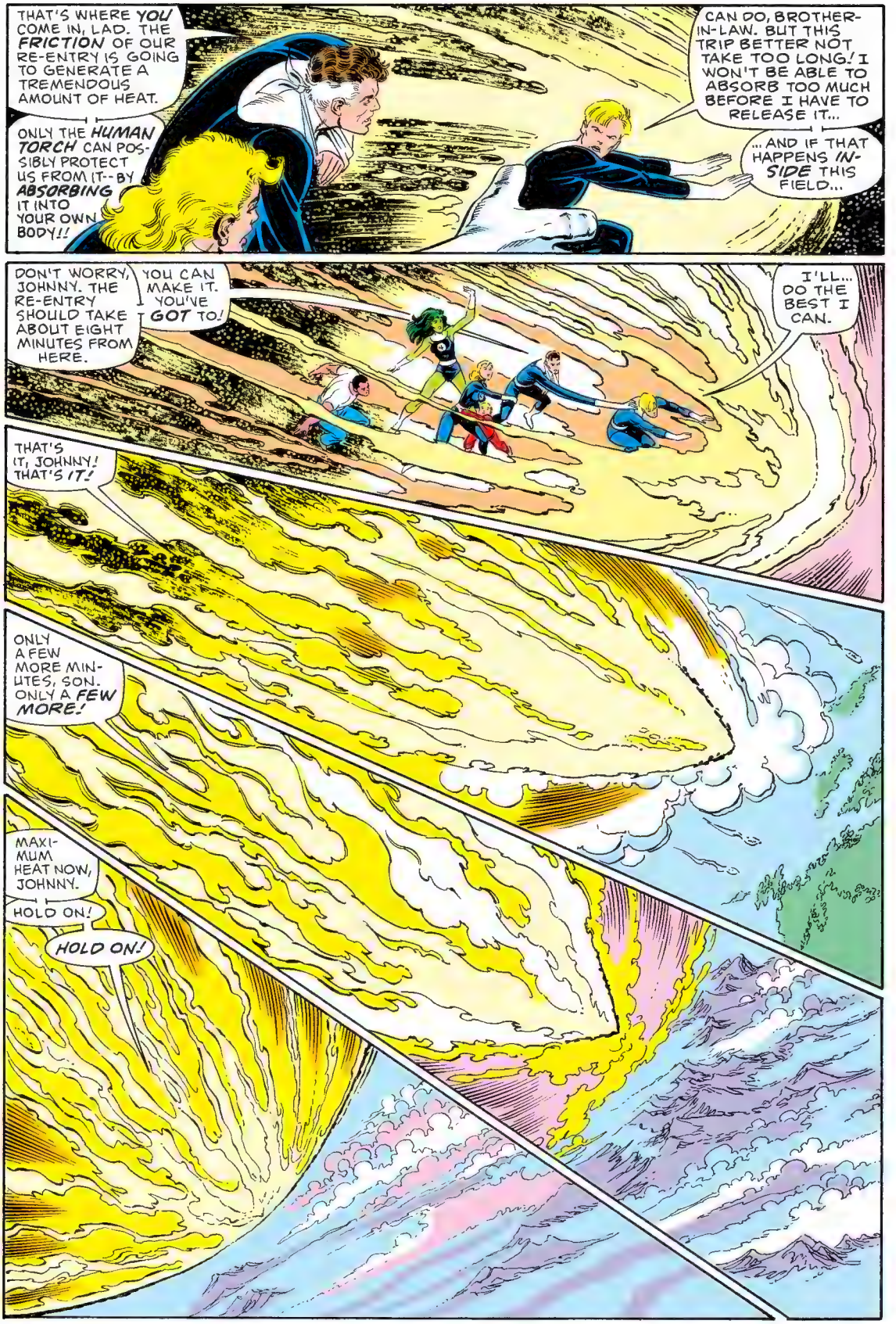
CHAPTER ONE:

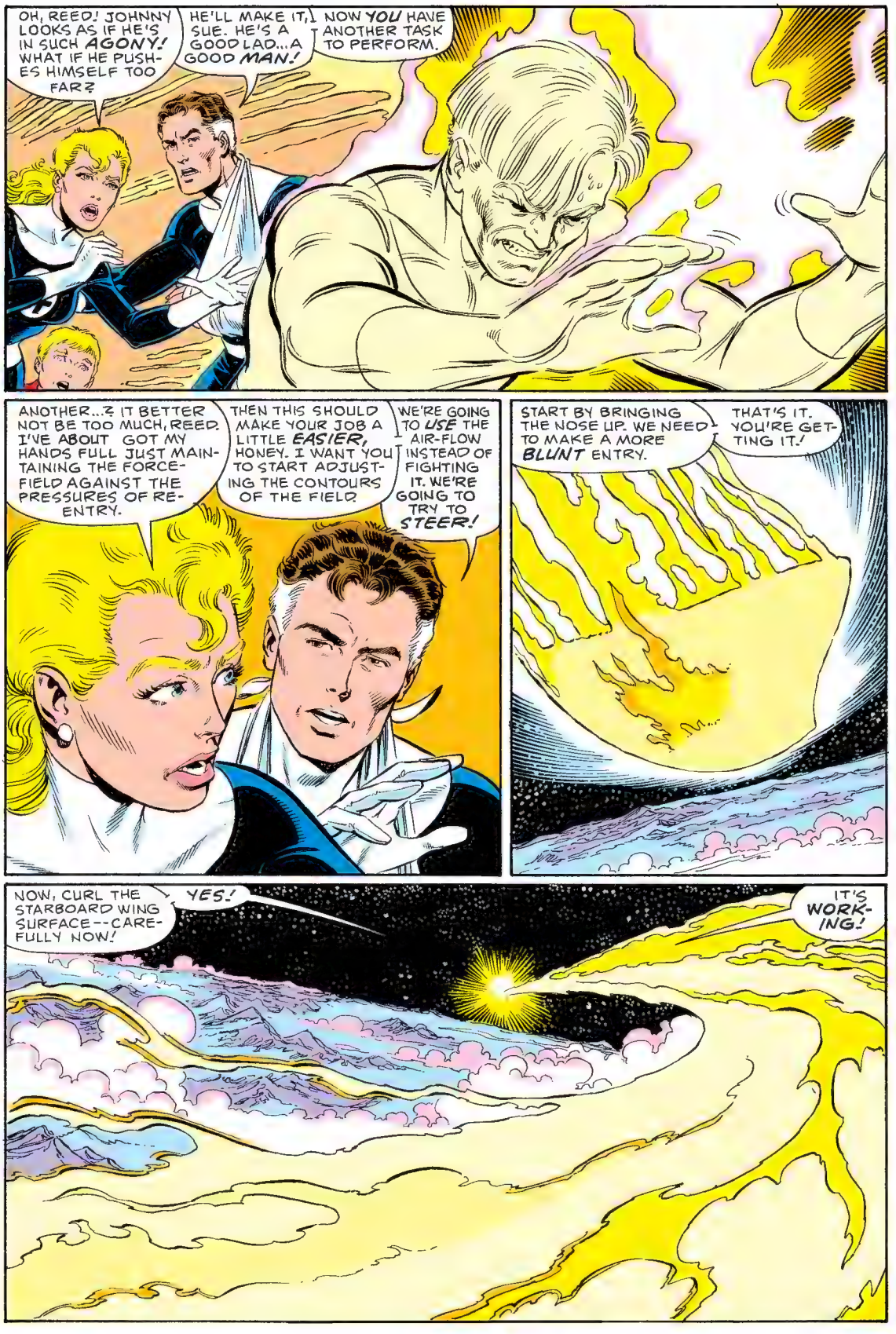
THOUGH HEAVENS FALL...

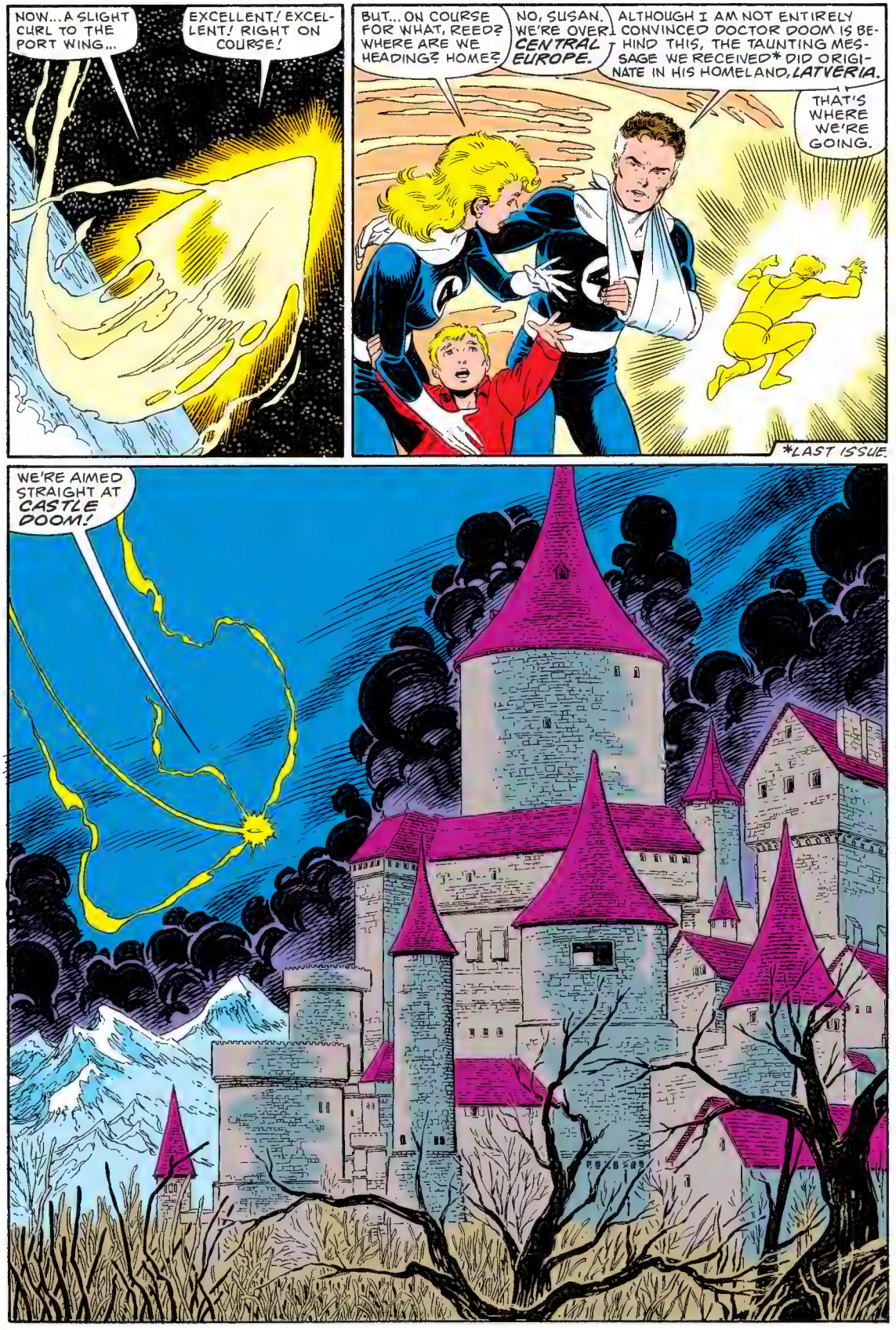

IT'S GONE!
ALL RIGHT, SUE, DRAW IN YOUR FORCE-FIELD BUBBLE. PULL US ALL CLOSER TOGETHER.
I'M ALREADY DOING JUST THAT, REED, DARLING. BUT I MUST SAY THAT WAS PROBABLY THE BIGGEST STRAIN I THINK MY FIELD HAS EVER HAD TO ENDURE...
...PROTECTING US FROM THAT EXPLOSION AND HOLDING IN ENOUGH AIR FOR US TO BREATHE!
YOU FOLLOWED MY INSTRUCTIONS PERFECTLY, HONEY. TO WHOEVER WAS SCANNING US WITH THAT LITTLE DEVICE, WE WOULD HAVE SEEMED QUITE DEAD!
THAT WAS PRETTY SCARY, HUH, MOMMY?

YES, IT WAS, FRANKLIN. BUT IT'S OVER NOW--AT LEAST THAT PART OF IT.
BUT... REED, YOU SAID, "WHOEVER WAS SCANNING, " DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT WAS DOCTOR DOOM WHO ATTACKED US?
LET'S JUST SAY I HAVE MY DOUBTS, SHE-HULK.
THE METHODOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY WERE CERTAINLY HIS, BUT DRAWING OUR HEADQUARTERS INTO EARTH-ORBIT IS SOMETHING HE TRIED ONCE BEFORE...
...AND IT IS MOST UNLIKE VON DOOM TO REPEAT HIMSELF--ESPECIALLY WITH A SCHEME THAT FAILED THE FIRST TIME.
WELL, NOT TO BELABOR THE OBVIOUS, IT SURE SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED THIS TIME! WE MAY HAVE SURVIVED THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUR H.Q., REED...
...BUT WE'RE STILL TWO HUNDRED MILES UP IN SPACE, WITH BARELY ENOUGH AIR TO LAST TWENTY MINUTES AND ALL YOUR VEHICLES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED!
WYATT'S GOT A POINT, REED. HOW DO WE GET DOWN? I'M THE ONLY ONE OF US WHO CAN FLY, BUT MY FLAME WON'T BURN UP THIS HIGH.
I'M FULLY AWARE OF THE SITUATION, JOHNNY. IN FACT, I HAVE ALREADY DECIDED UPON OUR BEST COURSE OF ACTION. AND IT WILL DEPEND IN PART UPON YOUR POWERS--BUT MOSTLY IT WILL DEPEND UPON SUE.
ME?
YOUR FORCE-FIELD IS OUR ONLY HOPE, DARLING. NOW, FIRST OPEN A TINY PIN-HOLE IN THIS SIDE OF IT.
QUICKLY!
BUT, THAT WILL LET OUT OUR AIR... OH, OF COURSE! I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING!
THERE!
PHUUUIST


HEY, IT'S WORKING! WE'RE MOVING TOWARDS THE EARTH!
BUT THIS FORCE-FIELD BUBBLE HAS ALL THE AERODYNAMICS OF A BRICK! HOW CAN WE CONTROL OUR DESCENT?
ALL CONSIDERED IN MY PLAN, JOHNNY. DON'T WORRY.
SUE, CLOSE THE AIR-JET.
NOW, RELAX YOUR FORCE-FIELD'S TENSION. I'M GOING TO STRETCH OUT MY BODY INTO A SPECIFIC SHAPE.
LET YOUR FORCE-FIELD ALTER TO MIMIC ME.
THAT'S IT, DARLING! WE'RE GETTING IT!
START INCREASING THE FIELD'S RIGIDITY ON THE LEADING EDGE.
PERFECT! A PERFECT AIR-FOIL CONFIGURATION. NOW, HOLD THAT SHAPE, SUE, AS I RETURN TO MY HUMAN FORM.
BUT... WE'RE STARTING TO HEAT UP!


THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN, LAD. THE FRICTION OF OUR RE-ENTRY IS GOING TO GENERATE A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF HEAT.
ONLY THE HUMAN TORCH CAN POSSIBLY PROTECT US FROM IT-- BY ABSORBING IT INTO YOUR OWN BODY!!
CAN DO, BROTHER-IN-LAW. BUT THIS TRIP BETTER NOT TAKE TOO LONG! I WON'T BE ABLE TO ABSORB TOO MUCH BEFORE I HAVE TO RELEASE IT...
...AND IF THAT HAPPENS INSIDE THIS FIELD...
DON'T WORRY, JOHNNY. THE RE-ENTRY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT EIGHT MINUTES FROM HERE.
YOU CAN MAKE IT. YOU'VE GOT TO!
I'LL.. DO THE BEST I CAN.
THAT'S IT, JOHNNY! THAT'S IT!
ONLY A FEW MORE MINUTES, SON. ONLY A FEW MORE!
MAXIMUM HEAT NOW, JOHNNY.
HOLD ON!
HOLD ON!

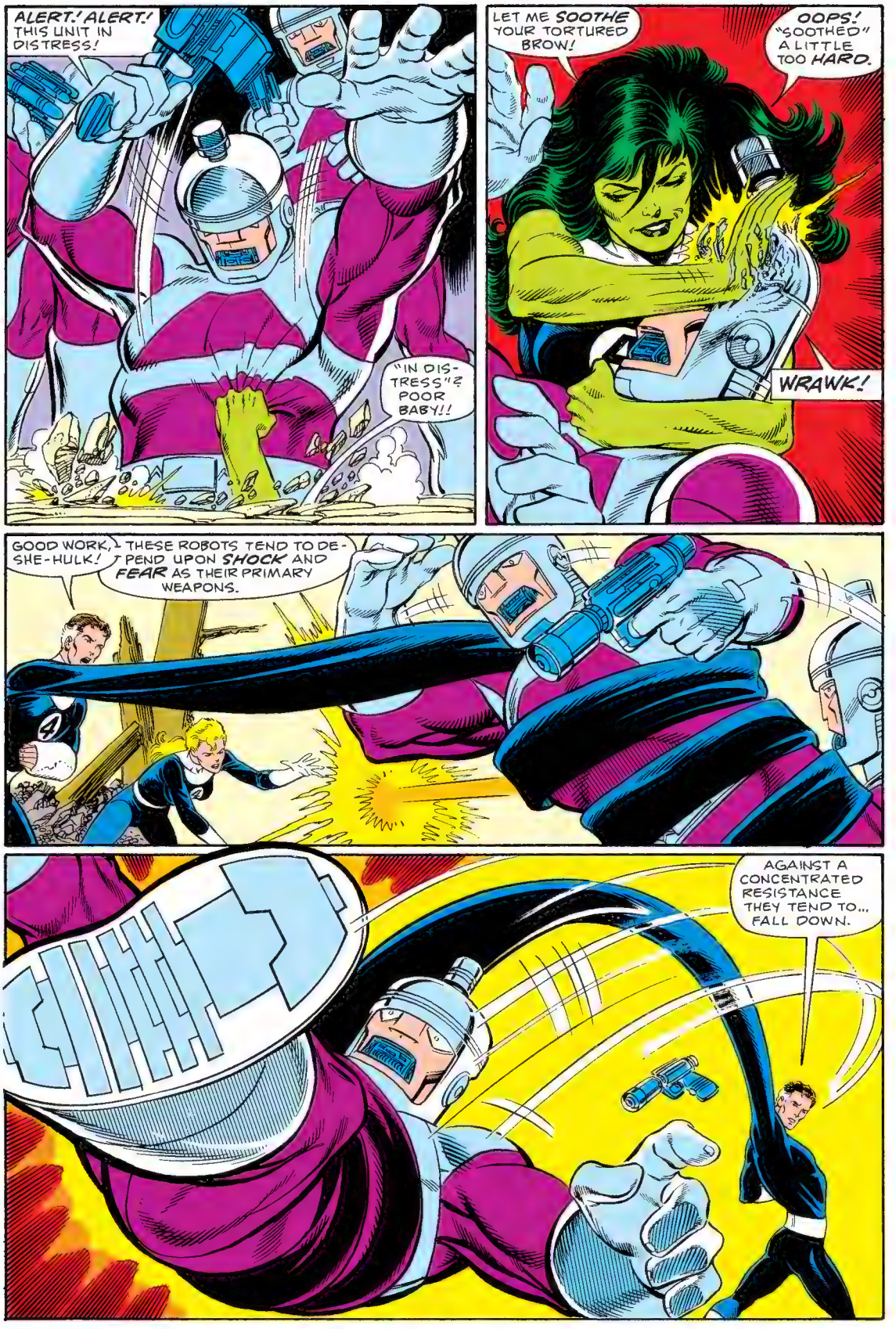

OH, REED! JOHNNY LOOKS AS IF HE'S IN SUCH AGONY! WHAT IF HE PUSHES HIMSELF TOO FAR?
HE'LL MAKE IT, SUE. HE'S A GOOD LAD...A GOOD MAN!
NOW YOU HAVE ANOTHER TASK TO PERFORM.
ANOTHER...? IT BETTER NOT BE TOO MUCH, REED. I'VE ABOUT GOT MY HANDS FULL JUST MAINTAINING THE FORCE-FIELD AGAINST THE PRESSURES OF RE-ENTRY.
THEN THIS SHOULD MAKE YOUR JOB A LITTLE EASIER, HONEY. I WANT YOU TO START ADJUSTING THE CONTOURS OF THE FIELD.
WE'RE GOING TO USE THE AIR-FLOW INSTEAD OF FIGHTING IT. WE'RE GOING TO TRY TO STEER!
START BY BRINGING THE NOSE UP. WE NEED TO MAKE A MORE BLUNT ENTRY.
THAT'S IT. YOU'RE GETTING IT!
NOW, CURL THE STARBOARD WING SURFACE--CAREFULLY NOW!
YES!
IT'S WORKING!

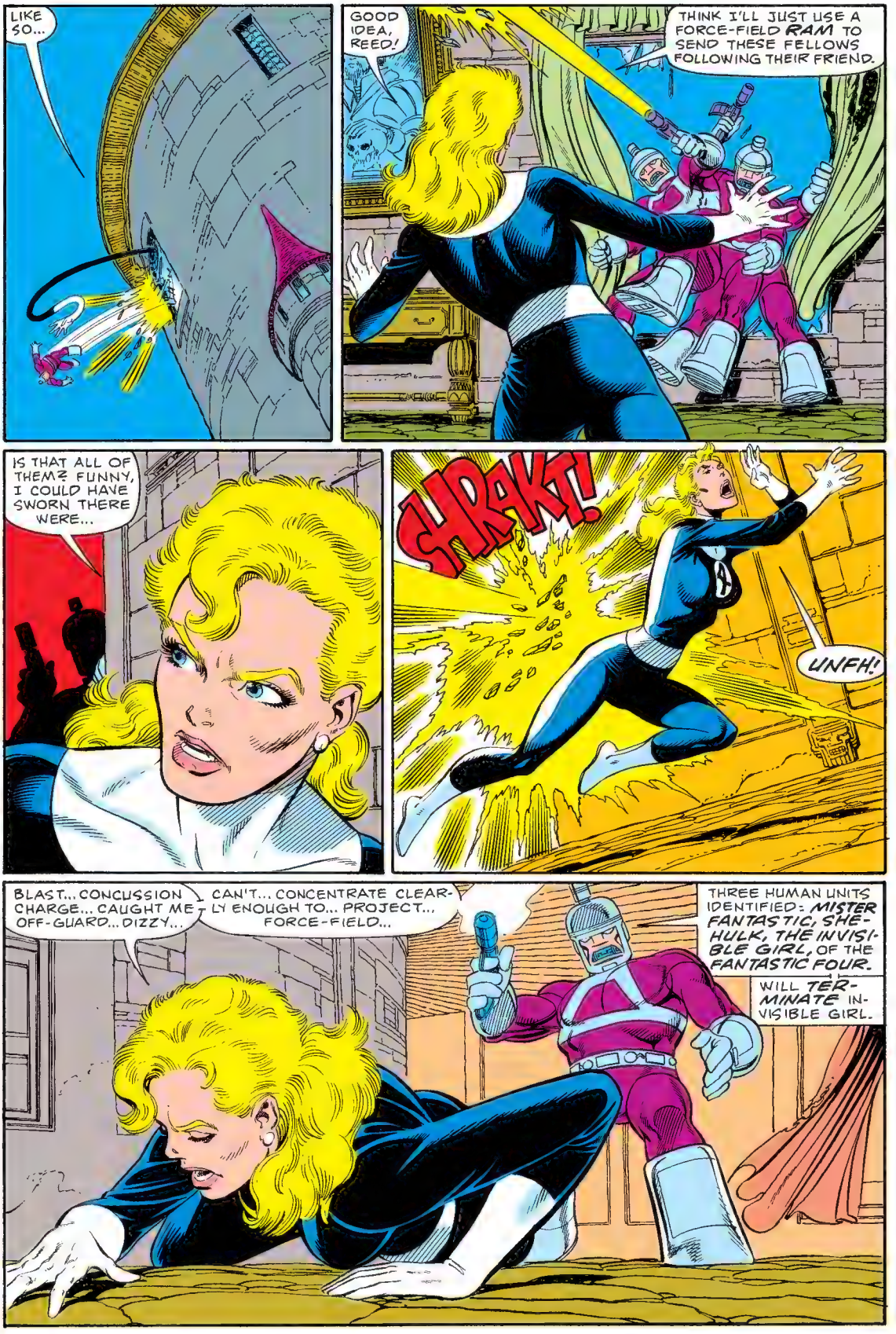

NOW... A SLIGHT CURL TO THE PORT WING...
EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT! RIGHT ON COURSE!
BUT... ON COURSE FOR WHAT, REED? WHERE ARE WE HEADING? HOME?
NO, SUSAN. WE'RE OVER CENTRAL EUROPE.
ALTHOUGH I AM NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCED DOCTOR DOOM IS BEHIND THIS, THE TAUNTING MESSAGE WE RECEIVED* DID ORIGINATE IN HIS HOMELAND, LATVERIA.
THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING.
*LAST ISSUE.
WE'RE AIMED STRAIGHT AT CASTLE DOOM!

CHAPTER TWO:
FATHER TO THE MAN...
REED! I...CAN'T HOLD IT ANYMORE! GOTTA LET GO!
IT'S OKAY, JOHNNY. YOUR JOB IS DONE!
SUE, OPEN YOUR FORCE-FIELD TO LET HIM OUT.
SHE-HULK, WE'LL NEED YOUR STRENGTH AND NEAR-INVULNERABILITY NOW...
...AS A LIVING BATTERING RAM!
AHHHH!
JUST IN TIME!
ALL RIGHT, SHE-HULK, BRACE YOURSELF.
SUE, LET YOUR FORCE-FIELD SOFTEN AND ENFOLD US ALL... TO CUSHION THE IMPACT.
"IMPACT"? THAT HARDLY SEEMS A STRONG ENOUGH WORD FOR HOW HARD WE'RE GOING TO HIT, REED.
I'D RATHER SAY...

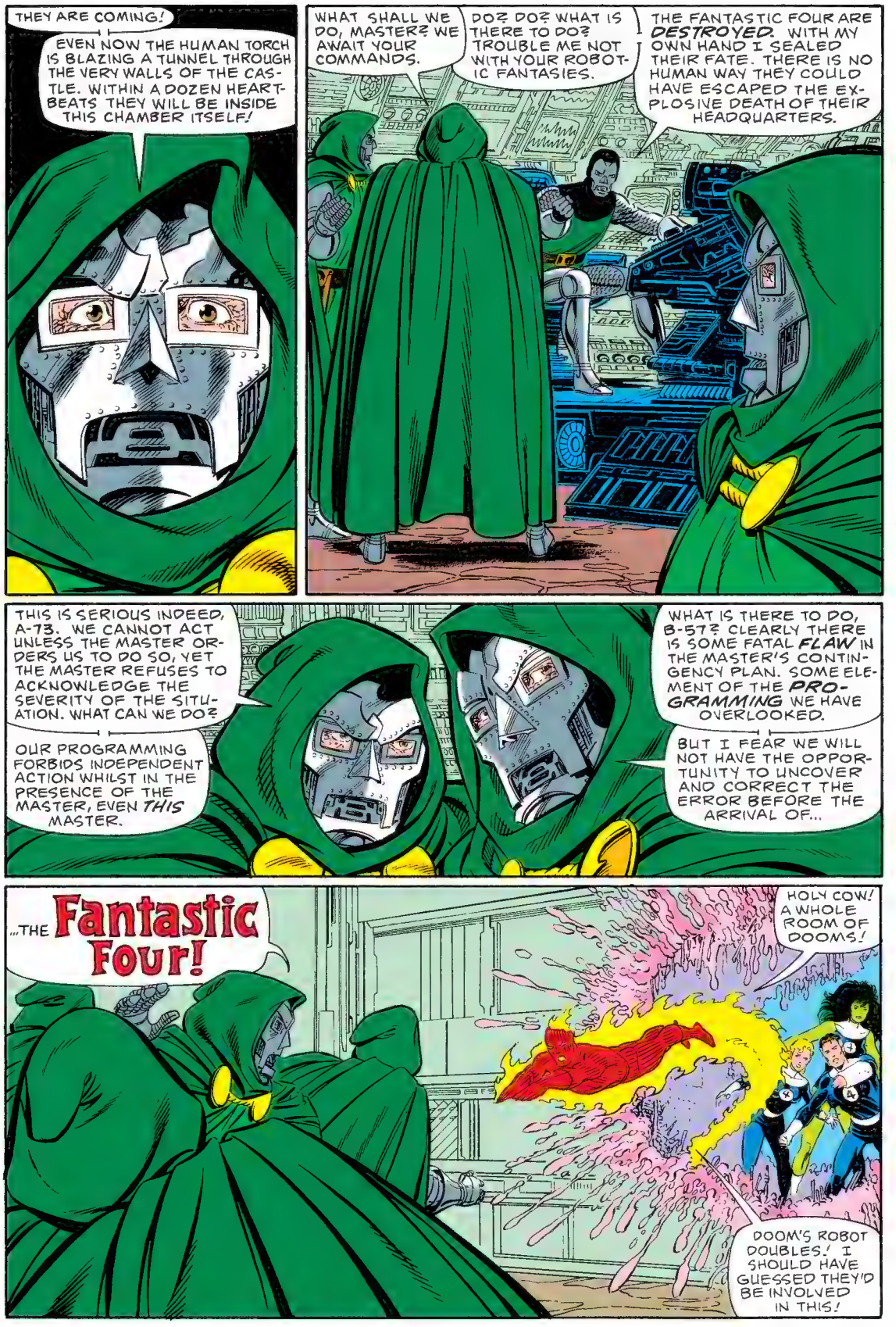
IT'S CLOBBERING TIME!
WHOUF! THAT WAS QUITE A RIDE! BUT I DON'T THINK I'D RECOMMEND TRYING TO SELL THE CONCEPT TO ANY AMUSEMENT PARKS!
I HAD NOT CONSIDERED DOING SO, WYATT.
IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?
SUE?
FRANKLIN?
SHE-HULK?
SHE-HULK?
I'M FINE. BUT MY GLOVES HAVE SEEN BETTER DAYS. GUESS THERE ARE SOME THINGS EVEN UNSTABLE MOLECULES CAN'T STAND UP TO.
WELL, THEY WERE NEVER INTENDED TO BE INDESTRUCTIBLE, SHE-HULK, ONLY TO ADAPT TO OUR INDIVIDUAL POWERS.
NOW, ON YOUR TOES, EVERYONE.
DOOM'S GUARDIAN ROBOTS SHOULD BE INVESTIGATING THIS BREACH...
RIGHT ABOUT NOW, I'D SAY, DARLING.
ALERT! ALERT!

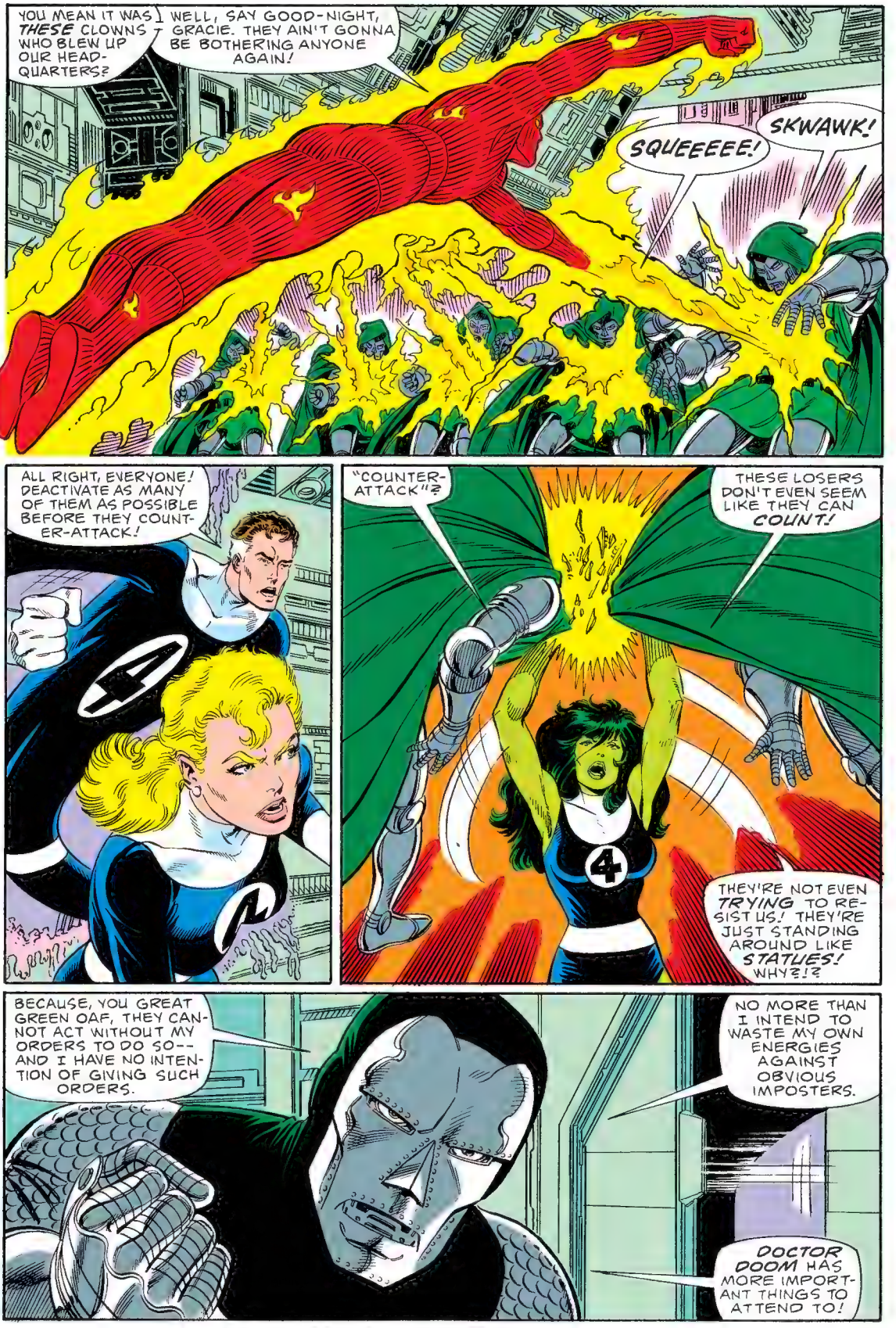
ANOTHER FORCE-FIELD SHOULD SLOW THEM DOWN.
BUT WE'LL HAVE TO START BATTLING OUR WAY THROUGH THEM TO REACH DOOM.
WYATT--TAKE FRANKLIN. TRY TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE CASTLE.
WILL DO, SUE. BUT... THE INTERNAL DEFENSES?
THEY'RE DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO KEEP PEOPLE *OUT*, WYATT. IF YOU'RE CAUTIOUS, YOU SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT.
THEN WE'RE ON OUR WAY. TAKE CARE, JENNIFER.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, SWEETIE.
I'M JUST GOING TO DROP TO THE NEXT FLOOR...
...AND GIVE THESE RO-BOZOS A *SURPRISE!*


ALERT! ALERT! THIS UNIT IN DISTRESS!
"IN DISTRESS"? POOR BABY!!
LET ME SOOTHE YOUR TORTURED BROW!
OOPS! "SOOTHED" A LITTLE TOO HARD.
WRAWK!
GOOD WORK, SHE-HULK! THESE ROBOTS TEND TO DEPEND UPON SHOCK AND FEAR AS THEIR PRIMARY WEAPONS.
AGAINST A CONCENTRATED RESISTANCE THEY TEND TO... FALL DOWN.


LIKE SO...
GOOD IDEA, REED!
THINK I'LL JUST USE A FORCE-FIELD RAM TO SEND THESE FELLOWS FOLLOWING THEIR FRIEND.
IS THAT ALL OF THEM? FUNNY, I COULD HAVE SWORN THERE WERE...
SHRAKT!
UNFH!
BLAST... CONCUSSION CHARGE... CAUGHT ME OFF-GUARD... DIZZY...
CAN'T... CONCENTRATE CLEARLY ENOUGH TO... PROJECT... FORCE-FIELD...
THREE HUMAN UNITS IDENTIFIED: MISTER FANTASTIC, SHE-HULK, THE INVISIBLE GIRL, OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
WILL TERMINATE INVISIBLE GIRL.

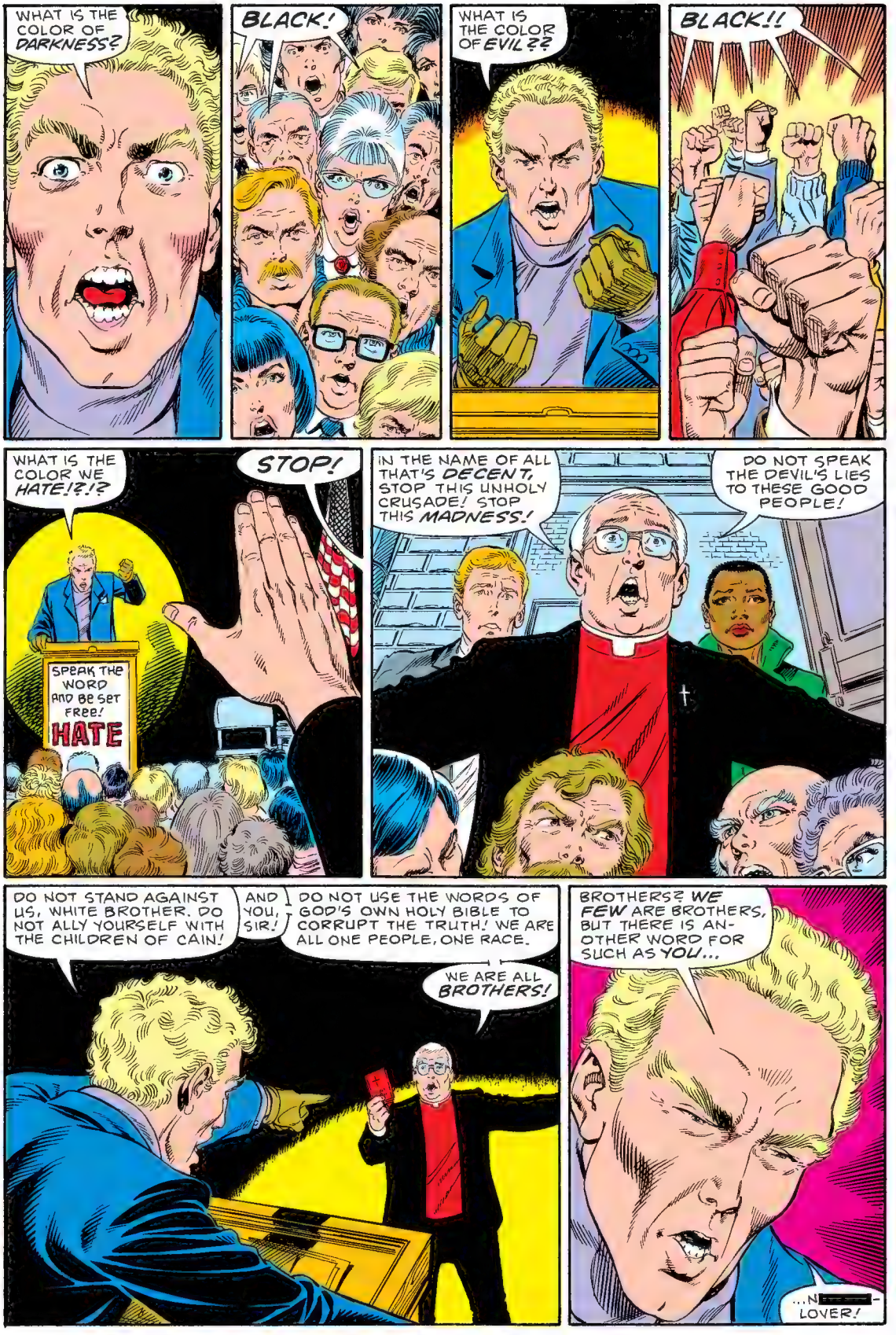
SORRY, CHARLIE. SHE MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH TO YOU, BUT SHE'S THE ONLY SISTER I'VE GOT AN' I'D KINDA LIKE TO KEEP HER A WHILE LONGER.
JOHNNY!
JOHNNY! GOOD WORK, LAD. YOU MELTED THAT ROBOT TO SLAG FASTER THAN I COULD HAVE REACHED HIM.
THAT'S WHAT KID BROTHERS ARE FOR, REED. NOW, WHAT'S THE SITUATION? ANY SIGN OF HIMSELF YET?
NO, ONLY A SEXTET OF GUARDIAN ROBOTS. CHARACTERISTICALLY, DOOM -- IF IT IS DOOM -- IS STAYING BEHIND THE SCENES.
BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO LET HIM, RIGHT?
NOT IF THIS IS THE FANTASTIC FOUR I THINK IT IS! YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE. WHICH WAY TO THE BIG MAN?
DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE KEEP, SHE-HULK. TORCH, NOW YOU'RE HERE, YOU CAN SAVE US SOME TIME.
GOT IT, LEADER-MAN.
OKAY, EVERYBODY. FOLLY ME!


THEY ARE COMING!
EVEN NOW THE HUMAN TORCH IS BLAZING A TUNNEL THROUGH THE VERY WALLS OF THE CASTLE. WITHIN A DOZEN HEARTBEATS THEY WILL BE INSIDE THIS CHAMBER ITSELF!
WHAT SHALL WE DO, MASTER? WE AWAIT YOUR COMMANDS.
DO? DO? WHAT IS THERE TO DO? TROUBLE ME NOT WITH YOUR ROBOTIC FANTASIES.
THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE DESTROYED. WITH MY OWN HAND I SEALED THEIR FATE. THERE IS NO HUMAN WAY THEY COULD HAVE ESCAPED THE EXPLOSIVE DEATH OF THEIR HEADQUARTERS.
THIS IS SERIOUS INDEED, A-73. WE CANNOT ACT UNLESS THE MASTER ORDERS US TO DO SO, YET THE MASTER REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SEVERITY OF THE SITUATION. WHAT CAN WE DO?
OUR PROGRAMMING FORBIDS INDEPENDENT ACTION WHILST IN THE PRESENCE OF THE MASTER, EVEN THIS MASTER.
WHAT IS THERE TO DO, B-57? CLEARLY THERE IS SOME FATAL FLAW IN THE MASTER'S CONTINGENCY PLAN. SOME ELEMENT OF THE PROGRAMMING WE HAVE OVERLOOKED.
BUT I FEAR WE WILL NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO UNCOVER AND CORRECT THE ERROR BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF...
...THE Fantastic Four!
HOLY COW! A WHOLE ROOM OF DOOMS!
DOOM'S ROBOT DOUBLES! I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED THEY'D BE INVOLVED IN THIS!


YOU MEAN IT WAS THESE CLOWNS WHO BLEW UP OUR HEAD-QUARTERS?
WELL, SAY GOOD-NIGHT, GRACIE. THEY AIN'T GONNA BE BOTHERING ANYONE AGAIN!
SQUEEEEE!
SKWAWK!
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE! DEACTIVATE AS MANY OF THEM AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THEY COUNTER-ATTACK!
"COUNTER-ATTACK"?
THESE LOSERS DON'T EVEN SEEM LIKE THEY CAN COUNT!
THEY'RE NOT EVEN TRYING TO RESIST US! THEY'RE JUST STANDING AROUND LIKE STATUES! WHY?!?
BECAUSE, YOU GREAT GREEN OAF, THEY CANNOT ACT WITHOUT MY ORDERS TO DO SO--AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF GIVING SUCH ORDERS.
NO MORE THAN I INTEND TO WASTE MY OWN ENERGIES AGAINST OBVIOUS IMPOSTERS.
DOCTOR DOOM HAS MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO ATTEND TO!

"IMPOSTORS"? NOW, HOLD ON THERE, HERMAN. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE IN ANY KIND OF A POSITION TO GO AROUND NAME-CALLING, DO YOU?
UNHAND ME! NONE MAY TOUCH THE PERSON OF DOOM!
MAYBE NOT. BUT Y'KNOW, I'VE GOT A FEELING I HAVEN'T DONE THAT. 'CAUSE I DON'T THINK YOU'RE THE REAL McCOY, BUSTER.
LET'S JUST OPEN UP THIS ZOOT SUIT OF YOURS AND FIND OUT, SHALL WE?
WRATH!
HOLEEE...
Y-YOU'RE JUST A KID! A BABY! YOU CAN'T BE MORE THAN A FEW YEARS OLDER THAN FRANKLIN!
NO! NO! I AM VICTOR VON DOOM! I AM DOOM! I AM! I AM! I AM!
REED...?
CAREFUL, SHE-HULK. WE KNOW THIS BOY. HIS NAME IS KRISTOFF. HE WAS... ADOPTED BY DOOM WHEN THE LAD'S MOTHER WAS MURDERED BY AGENTS OF THE REBEL GOVERNMENT THAT BRIEFLY OUSTED DOOM'S RULE HERE.*
*AS SHOWN IN F.F. #247.

SOMEHOW THE POOR CHILD HAS EVIDENTLY BEEN BRAINWASHED INTO BELIEVING HE IS DOOM. DOUBTLESS AS PART OF SOME TERRIBLE CONTINGENCY PLAN DOOM CREATED AGAINST THE EVENTUALITY OF HIS OWN DEATH.
THAT WOULD CERTAINLY EXPLAIN WHY THIS LATEST ASSAULT WAS A DUPLICATION OF DOOM'S SECOND ATTACK ON US. AND WHY IT FAILED.
IT DID NOT FAIL! YOU COULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BAXTER BUILDING!
NOT THAT FIRST TIME, NO.* BUT THEN WE DID NOT HAVE ONE VERY SPECIAL ACE IN THE HOLE.
FOR IT WAS NOT UNTIL SEVERAL WEEKS LATER THAT SUE FIRST BECAME ABLE TO GENERATE HER INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELDS.
*IN ISSUE #6.
WHATEVER SEQUENTIAL PROGRAMMING KRISTOFF HAS UNDERGONE MUST HAVE BEEN HALTED BEFORE HE WAS SUPPLIED WITH THAT IMPORTANT ADDITION.
BUT... REED, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW? WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THE POOR KID?
IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE I CAN DETERMINE IF KRISTOFF CAN BE DRAWN OUT OF THIS TERRIBLE MINDLOCK, JOHNNY.
THE BEST WE CAN DO FOR NOW IS TO TAKE HIM HOME WITH US...
...HOME...?
OH... OH, REED! IT'S ONLY JUST NOW STARTING TO SINK IN! THE BAXTER BUILDING! OUR HOME! IT'S GONE!
I... I HADN'T EVEN HAD TIME TO CONSIDER THAT! ALL OUR POSSESSIONS... A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES... GONE!
WE'VE LOST EVERYTHING!
EVERYTHING!
WHAT MORE COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG...?


WHAT IS THE COLOR OF DARKNESS?
BLACK!
WHAT IS THE COLOR OF EVIL??
BLACK!!
WHAT IS THE COLOR WE HATE!?!?
STOP!
SPEAK THE WORD AND BE SET FREE!
HATE
IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S DECENT, STOP THIS UNHOLY CRUSADE! STOP THIS MADNESS!
DO NOT SPEAK THE DEVIL'S LIES TO THESE GOOD PEOPLE!
DO NOT STAND AGAINST US, WHITE BROTHER. DO NOT ALLY YOURSELF WITH THE CHILDREN OF CAIN!
AND YOU, SIR!
DO NOT USE THE WORDS OF GOD'S OWN HOLY BIBLE TO CORRUPT THE TRUTH! WE ARE ALL ONE PEOPLE, ONE RACE.
WE ARE ALL BROTHERS!
BROTHERS? WE FEW ARE BROTHERS, BUT THERE IS ANOTHER WORD FOR SUCH AS YOU...
...N[redacted]-LOVER!

...N[redacted]- LOVER...
...N[redacted]- LOVER...
...N[redacted]- LOVER...
...N[redacted]- LOVER...
FATHER, I THINK WE'D BEST...
NO.
NO! I CAME HERE TO HELP THESE PEOPLE...
PLEASE, GOOD PEOPLE! WHAT ARE YOU...
N-NO!
UNGH!
AHHGH!!
YOU HAVE DONE WELL THIS NIGHT, UNGER.
MASTER! IT PLEASES ME TO SERVE YOU...
OF COURSE IT DOES. BUT YOU ARE NOT DONE YET. YOU HAVE BUSINESS ELSEWHERE.
YES, MASTER. TWO MORE MEETINGS TONIGHT ALONE. TWO MORE NESTS OF HATRED TO BE CREATED.
AT ELEVEN, I MEET WITH THE SONS OF ZION, TO FAN THE FLAMES OF THEIR DISCONTENT.
BUT FIRST, AT NINE, THE BLACK WOMEN'S DEFENSE LEAGUE WILL HEAR ME.
AND SO THE SEED OF ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION WILL GROW...
...AND GROW...
...AND GROW!!

NEXT ISSUE: THERE'S A BRAND NEW HATE-MONGER IN TOWN, AND BEFORE HE'S DONE, HE'LL ROCK THE FF--AND THE WORLD--TO THEIR VERY FOUNDATIONS!

TELL THEM ALL THEY LOVE MUST DIE! IN 30 DAYS!

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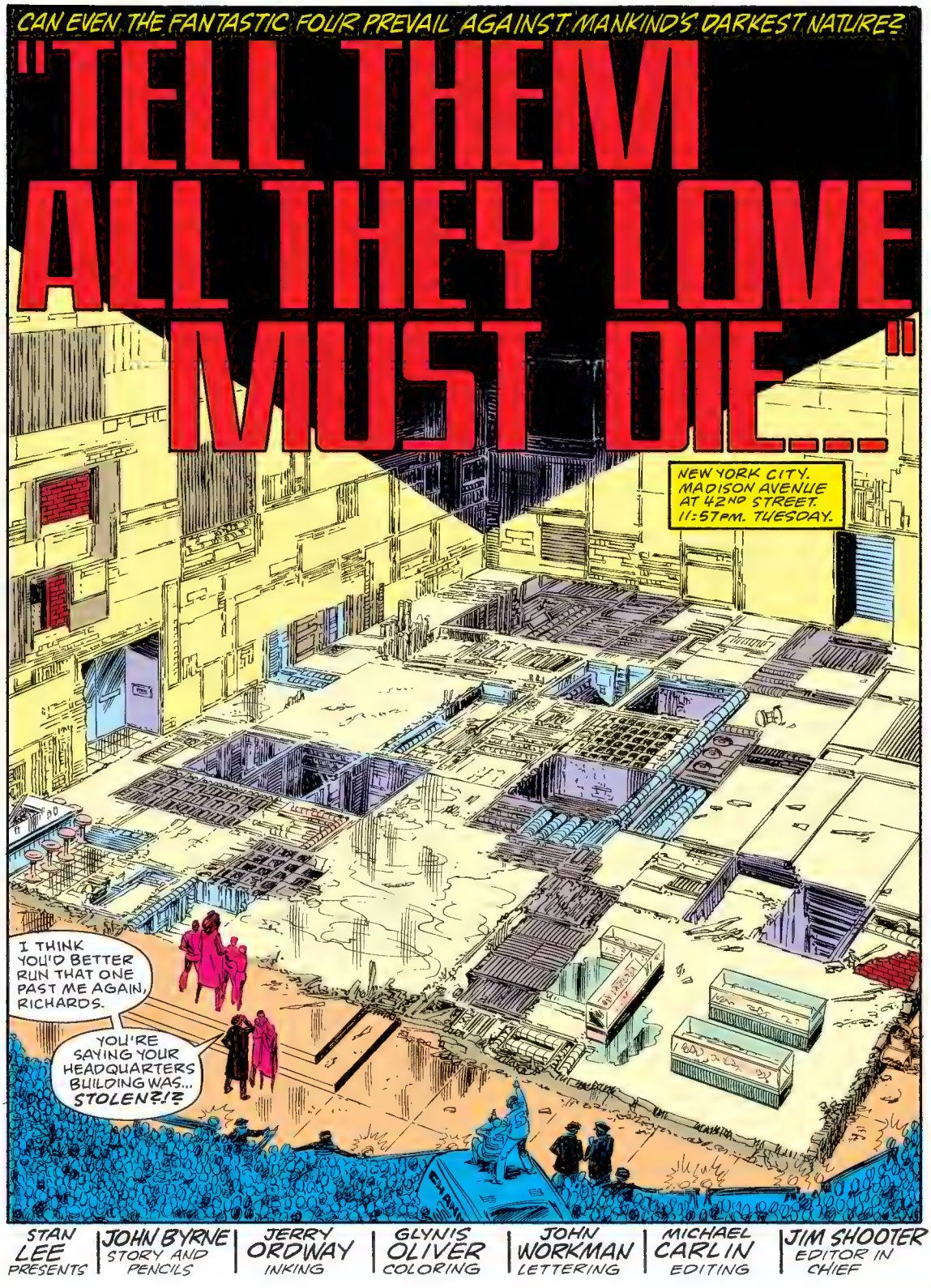
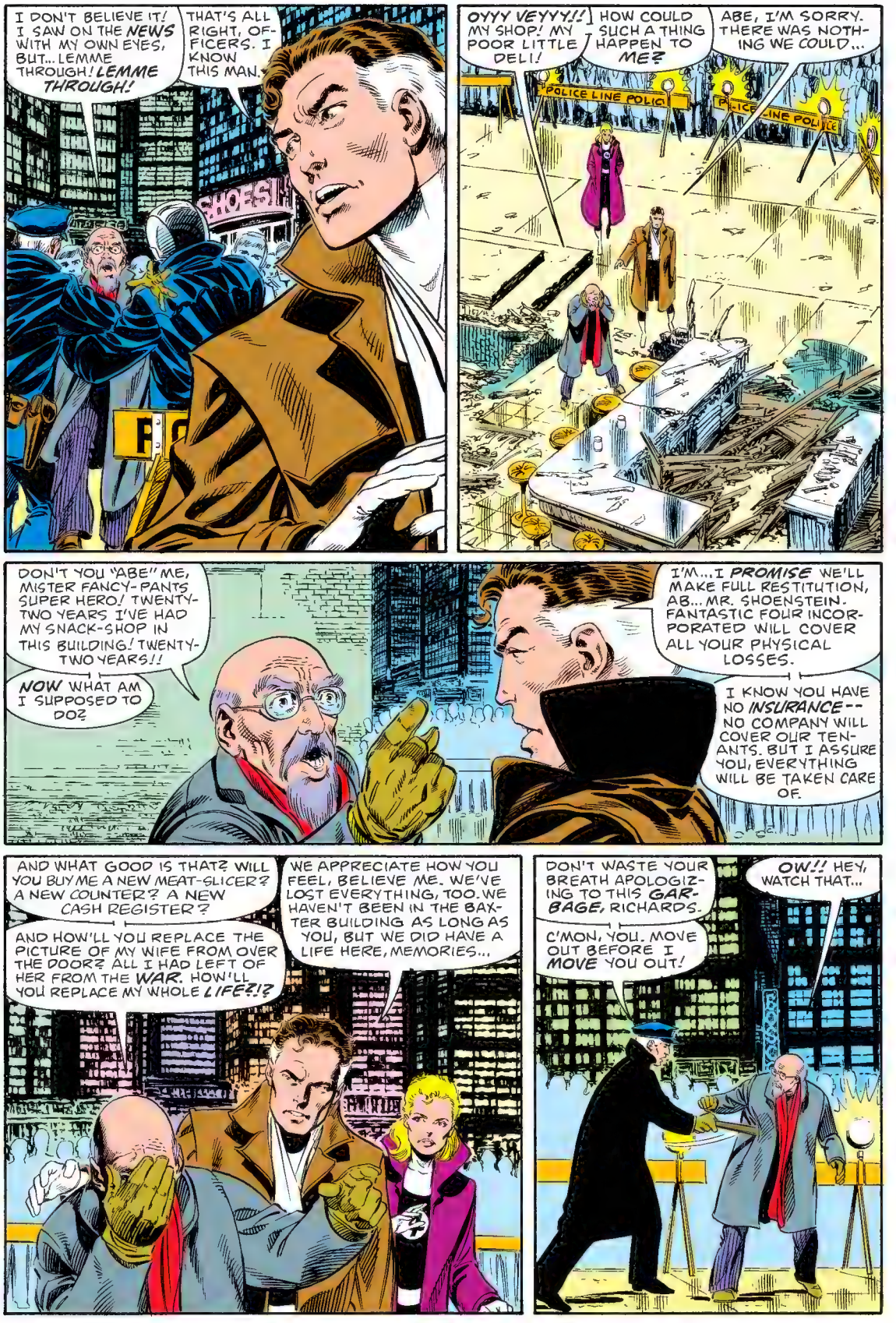
Fantastic Four
BYRNE & ORDWAY


CAN EVEN THE FANTASTIC FOUR PREVAIL AGAINST MANKIND'S DARKEST NATURE?
"TELL THEM ALL THEY LOVE MUST DIE..."
NEW YORK CITY. MADISON AVENUE AT 42ND STREET. 11:57PM. TUESDAY.
I THINK YOU'D BETTER RUN THAT ONE PAST ME AGAIN, RICHARDS.
YOU'RE SAYING YOUR HEADQUARTERS BUILDING WAS... STOLEN?!?
STAN LEE PRESENTS
JOHN BYRNE STORY AND PENCILS
JERRY ORDWAY INKING
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORING
JOHN WORKMAN LETTERING
MICHAEL CARLIN EDITING
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF

THAT'S A BIT HARD TO SWALLOW--EVEN GIVEN THE KINDS OF COMPANY YOU FOLKS KEEP.
NEVERTHELESS, IT'S TRUE, CAPTAIN. THE ENTIRE BAXTER BUILDING WAS STOLEN BY SOMEONE CLAIMING TO BE DOCTOR DOOM.
"USING A POWERFUL MAGNETIC GRAPPLER, HE TORE THE BUILDING FREE OF ITS FOUNDATIONS...
"...AND DREW IT ALL THE WAY INTO SPACE, CLEAR OF THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE.
"IT IS NOTHING SHORT OF MIRACULOUS THAT SO MASSIVE AN OBJECT PASSING OVER THE EARTH DID NOT TRIGGER COUNTLESS NATIONAL DEFENSE SYSTEMS.
"BUT IT DID NOT, NOR DID THE SUDDEN, EXPLOSIVE DEATH OF THE BUILDING, AS ALL THE INTERNAL SYSTEMS WERE DETONATED.
"FORTUNATELY THE BUILDING WAS EMPTY, DESERTED EXCEPT FOR US MEMBERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR."
WE WERE SAVED FROM CERTAIN DEATH ONLY BY THE INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD BUBBLE GENERATED BY MY WIFE.
WE WERE LUCKY THE DOOM-IMPOSTER HAD NOT TAKEN MY POWERS INTO ACCOUNT.
I'VE HEARD THE INVISIBLE GIRL'S POWERS ARE A LOT TOUGHER THAN MOST PEOPLE GIVE 'EM CREDIT FOR ...BUT EVEN SO, THIS IS REALLY TOO MUCH TO...
HEY!


I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I SAW ON THE NEWS WITH MY OWN EYES, BUT... LEMME THROUGH! LEMME THROUGH!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, OFFICERS. I KNOW THIS MAN.
SHOES!
OYYY VEYYY!! MY SHOP! MY POOR LITTLE DELI!
HOW COULD SUCH A THING HAPPEN TO ME?
ABE, I'M SORRY. THERE WAS NOTHING WE COULD...
POLICE LINE POLICE
DON'T YOU "ABE" ME, MISTER FANCY-PANTS SUPER HERO! TWENTY-TWO YEARS I'VE HAD MY SNACK-SHOP IN THIS BUILDING! TWENTY-TWO YEARS!!
NOW WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
I'M... I PROMISE WE'LL MAKE FULL RESTITUTION, AB... MR. SHOENSTEIN. FANTASTIC FOUR INCORPORATED WILL COVER ALL YOUR PHYSICAL LOSSES.
I KNOW YOU HAVE NO INSURANCE -- NO COMPANY WILL COVER OUR TENANTS. BUT I ASSURE YOU, EVERYTHING WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF.
AND WHAT GOOD IS THAT? WILL YOU BUY ME A NEW MEAT-SLICER? A NEW COUNTER? A NEW CASH REGISTER?
AND HOW'LL YOU REPLACE THE PICTURE OF MY WIFE FROM OVER THE DOOR? ALL I HAD LEFT OF HER FROM THE WAR. HOW'LL YOU REPLACE MY WHOLE LIFE?!?
WE APPRECIATE HOW YOU FEEL, BELIEVE ME. WE'VE LOST EVERYTHING, TOO. WE HAVEN'T BEEN IN THE BAXTER BUILDING AS LONG AS YOU, BUT WE DID HAVE A LIFE HERE, MEMORIES...
DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH APOLOGIZING TO THIS GARBAGE, RICHARDS.
C'MON, YOU. MOVE OUT BEFORE I MOVE YOU OUT!
OW!! HEY, WATCH THAT...

AWRIGHT! THAT'S ENOUGH OUTTA YOU! THERE'S JUST NO POINT IN TRYIN' TO BE REASONABLE WITH YOUR KIND. UP AGAINST THE WALL AN' SPREAD 'EM!!
GOTT IN HIMMEL!
HEY, TAKE IT EASY, CAPTAIN! THAT'S AN OLD MAN, NOT AL CAPONE!
HANDS OFF, BOY.
I SAID HANDS OFF!!
WYATT!
I'M... OKAY, JEN. HE JUST... CAUGHT ME OFF-GUARD.
POLICE

AND NO WONDER!! THIS ISN'T NAZI GERMANY, PAL! WHERE DO YOU GET OFF WITH THE STORM TROOPER TACTICS?
THAT CUTS IT! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, GREENIE. YOU AN' HIYAWATHA BOTH!
SEIZE HER, MEN!!
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!!
GET OFFA ME BEFORE I BUST THE LOT OF YOU INTO NEXT WEEK!
SHE-HULK! NO! YOU MUST NOT RESIST!!
REED? YOU'RE KIDDING!!
NO... NO, I AM NOT, SHE-HULK. THERE IS SOMETHING SERIOUSLY AWRY HERE, BUT BRUTE FORCE IS NOT THE ANSWER.
AS A LAWYER, YOU KNOW YOU AND WYATT HAVE DONE NOTHING UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO MERIT INCARCERATION.
GO QUIETLY NOW, AND I'LL CONTACT YOU BOTH LATER.
WELL... ALL RIGHT. BUT IF WE DON'T HEAR FROM YOU SOON, I MIGHT JUST START A CROCHET PROJECT WITH THE BARS OF MY CELL...
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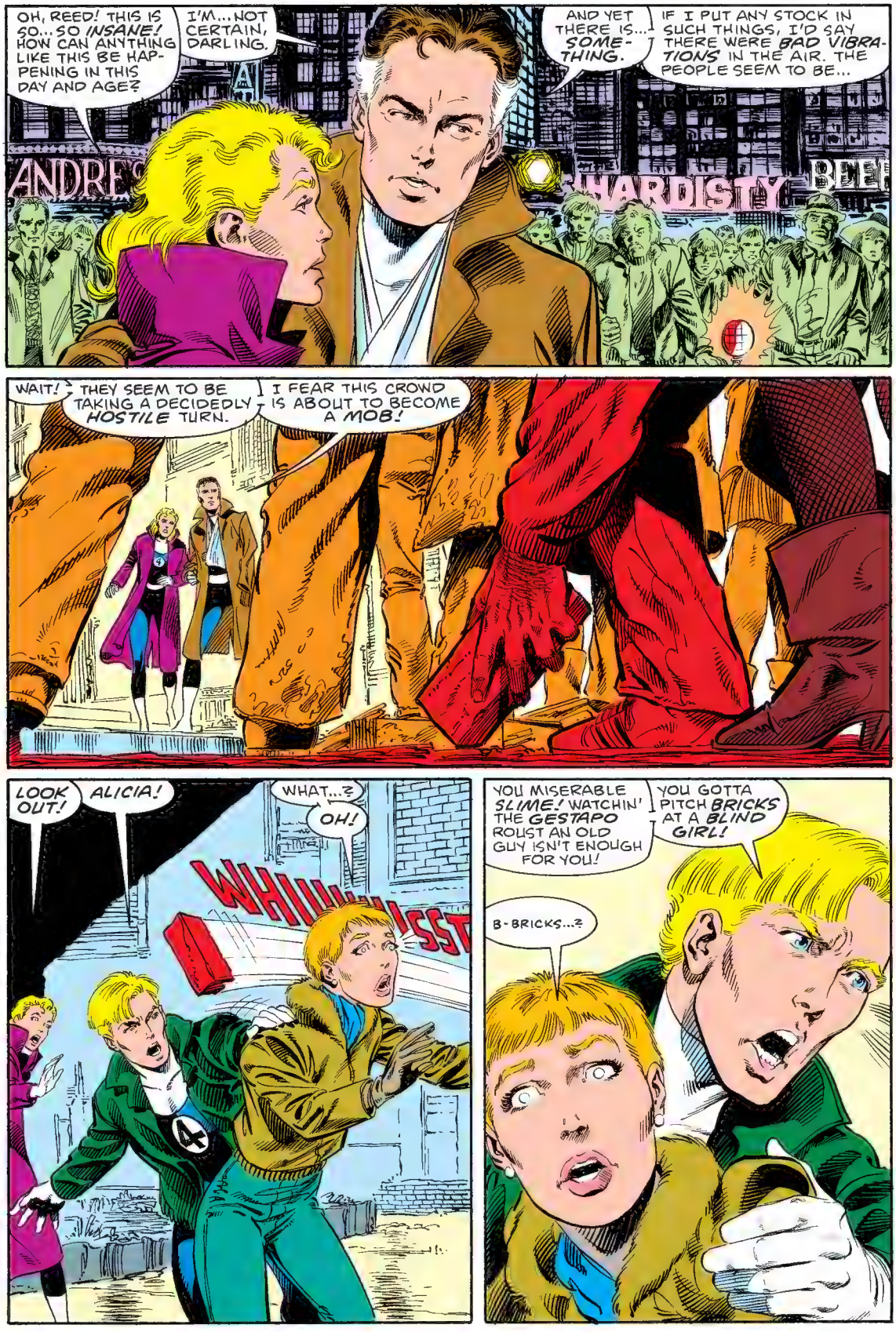
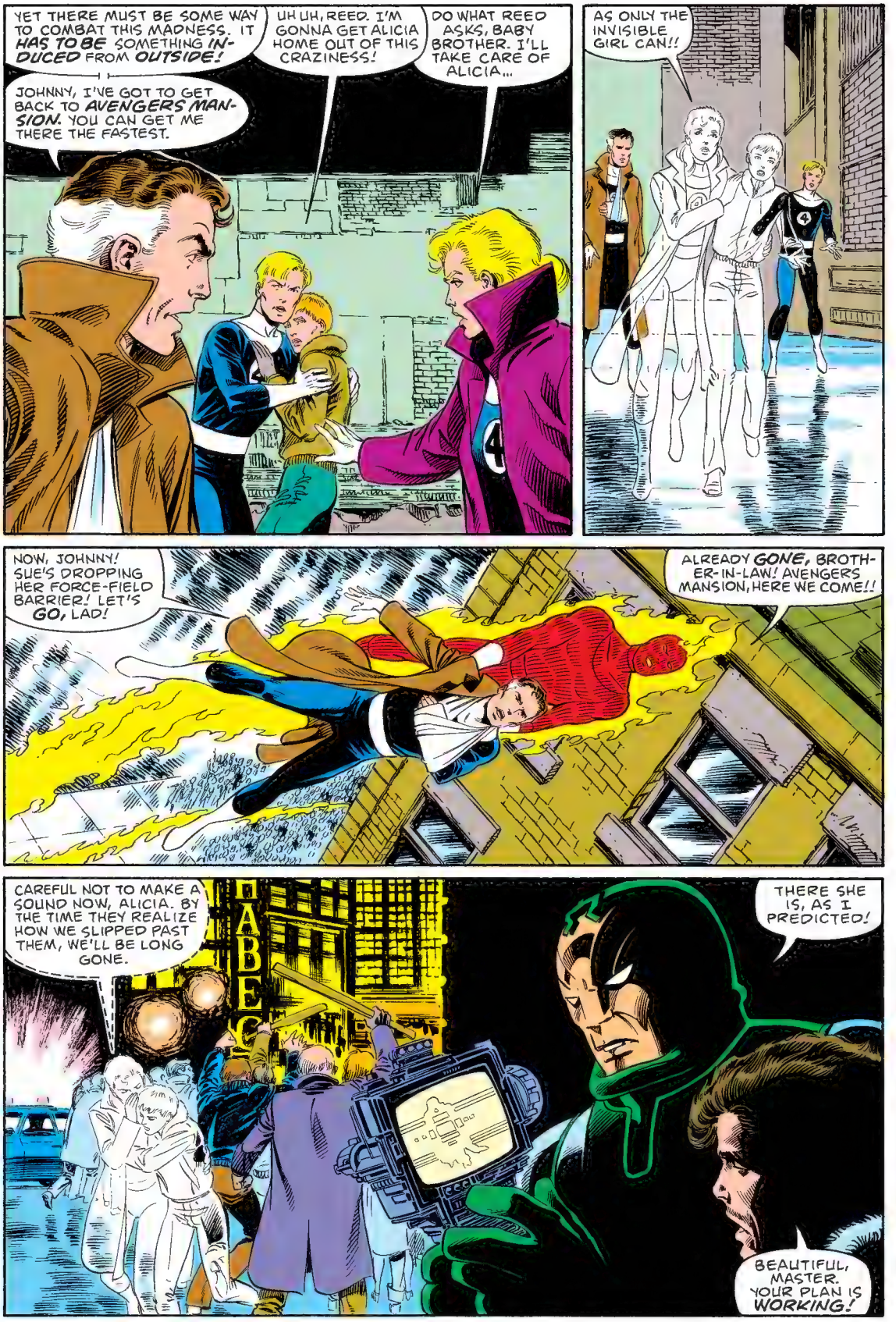

OH, REED! THIS IS SO...SO INSANE! HOW CAN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BE HAPPENING IN THIS DAY AND AGE?
I'M...NOT CERTAIN, DARLING.
AND YET THERE IS...SOMETHING.
IF I PUT ANY STOCK IN SUCH THINGS, I'D SAY THERE WERE BAD VIBRATIONS IN THE AIR. THE PEOPLE SEEM TO BE...
ANDRE
HARDISTY
WAIT!
THEY SEEM TO BE TAKING A DECIDEDLY HOSTILE TURN.
I FEAR THIS CROWD IS ABOUT TO BECOME A MOB!
LOOK OUT!
ALICIA!
WHAT...?
OH!
WHIIIISST
YOU MISERABLE SLIME! WATCHIN' THE GESTAPO ROUST AN OLD GUY ISN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU!
YOU GOTTA PITCH BRICKS AT A BLIND GIRL!
B-BRICKS...?

WELL, YOU JUST MADE YOURSELVES ONE WORLD-CLASS MISTAKE, CREEPS!
FLAME ON!
I OUGHTA JUST ROAST THE BUNCH OF YA RIGHT WHERE YOU STAND...
...BUT THAT'D JUST LOWER ME TO YOUR LEVEL.
YAH! LOOK OUT!
SO BACK OFF BEFORE I CHANGE MY MIND!
GET 'EM!
KILL 'EM BEFORE THEY KILL US!
REED...?
THEY'VE LOST CONTROL! SUE, SURROUND US ALL WITH AN INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD.
HURRY!
POLICE
DONE! BUT... WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WE CAN'T FIGHT THEM!
NO, WE DARE NOT USE OUR POWERS AGAINST NORMAL HUMANS.


YET THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO COMBAT THIS MADNESS. IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING INDUCED FROM OUTSIDE!
UH UH, REED. I'M GONNA GET ALICIA HOME OUT OF THIS CRAZINESS!
DO WHAT REED ASKS, BABY BROTHER. I'LL TAKE CARE OF ALICIA...
JOHNNY, I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO AVENGERS MANSION. YOU CAN GET ME THERE THE FASTEST.
AS ONLY THE INVISIBLE GIRL CAN!!
NOW, JOHNNY! SUE'S DROPPING HER FORCE-FIELD BARRIER! LET'S GO, LAD!
ALREADY GONE, BROTHER-IN-LAW! AVENGERS MANSION, HERE WE COME!!
CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE A SOUND NOW, ALICIA. BY THE TIME THEY REALIZE HOW WE SLIPPED PAST THEM, WE'LL BE LONG GONE.
THERE SHE IS, AS I PREDICTED!
BEAUTIFUL, MASTER. YOUR PLAN IS WORKING!

OF COURSE IT'S WORKING! DO YOU DARE TO SUGGEST THERE WAS EVER ANY DOUBT?
N-NO, MASTER!! I MEANT NO DISRESPECT! YOUR PLAN IS... PERFECTION ITSELF!
THAT'S BETTER! NOW, IT IS TIME TO INITIATE PHASE FOUR! BEGIN YOUR METAMORPHOSIS!
YES, MASTER. IT TAKES NO MORE THAN THE BLINKING OF AN EYE FOR ME TO DROP THE SHAPE I CURRENTLY WEAR...
...IN FAVOR OF ONE THE INVISIBLE GIRL WILL FIND MORE TRUSTWORTHY.
EXCELLENT! NOW, GO AFTER HER--AND DO NOT FAIL ME!
I SHALL NOT, MASTER. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR IS ASSURED!
BRRRR! DID YOU GET THAT SUDDEN CHILL, REED?
IT FELT LIKE SOMEONE JUST WALKED OVER MY GRAVE!
I'M GETTING A LARGE NUMBER OF STRANGE SENSATIONS, TORCH.
BUT THIS IS NO TIME FOR GUESS-WORK. THERE'S THE MANSION. THE EQUIPMENT THERE WILL HOPEFULLY PROVIDE SOME SOLID ANALYSIS. PERHAPS EVEN SOME ANSWERS!

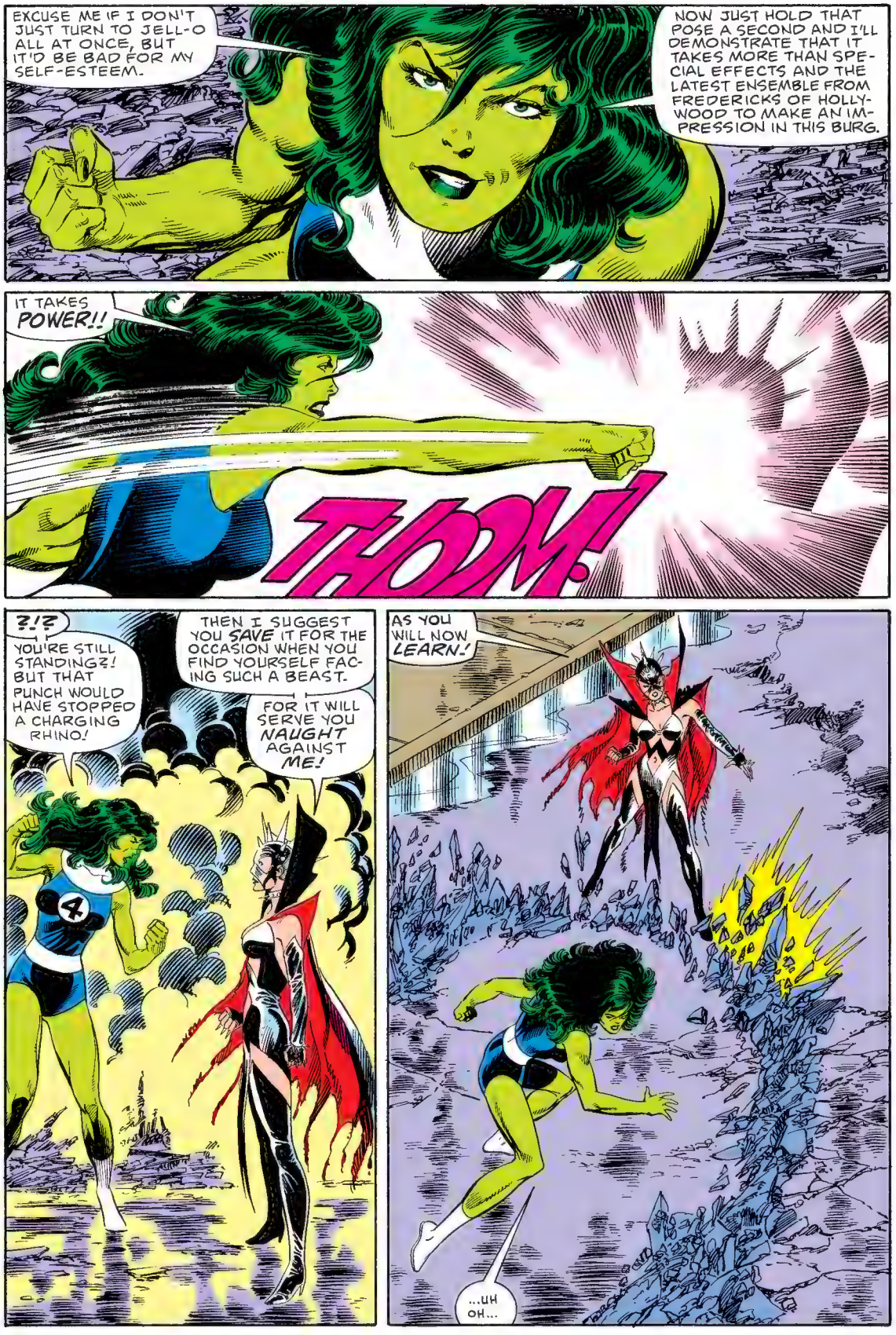
WOW! LOOK AT THAT MOB-SCENE! LOOKS LIKE THE CRAZINESS ISN'T CONFINED TO 42ND STREET!
MUTIES GO HOME!
I RATHER DOUBTED IT WOULD BE, JOHNNY. JARVIS, IS MY SON ALL RIGHT?
MISTER FANTASTIC! I'M SO GLAD YOU MADE IT BACK!
YES, SIR. LITTLE FRANKLIN IS SLEEPING UPSTAIRS.
GOOD. I'LL TRUST THE AUTOMATIC DEFENSES OF THIS BUILDING TO PROTECT HIM FROM THAT CROWD.
AND HE'LL NEED TO BE PROTECTED... SINCE THE WHOLE WORLD KNOWS HE'S A MUTANT!
BUT, NOW WE'VE GOT TO CONCENTRATE ON THIS GROWING MASS HYSTERIA. WE'VE GOT TO FIND SOME CLUE AS TO WHAT'S CAUSING IT.
THAT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY, REED.
PERHAPS IT IS, MASTER JOHNNY. COULD IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS...?
"...THE ONLY TRUE PATH TO AMERICA'S FUTURE. ACKNOWLEDGE THE HATE IN YOUR HEART. SET IT FREE, AND BE SET FREE..."
WHAT APPALLING NONSENSE!
READ THE WORD AND BE SET FREE
HATE
WHERE DID THIS COME FROM, JARVIS?
OH, THEY SEEM TO BE ALL OVER THE CITY, SIR. CAPTAIN AMERICA GATHERED A NUMBER OF THEM TOGETHER HERE.
HE FELT THEY NEEDED CLOSER STUDY...
...IN CASE THERE WAS MORE TO THEM THAN IT SEEMED.

AND HE MAY VERY WELL BE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT!
C'MON, JOHNNY. LET'S GET THIS THING TO THE LAB, RIGHT AWAY.
IF THERE IS ANYTHING STRANGE TO THIS, THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT!
NYPD
BOOM
WHAT THE...?!?
A BOMB! THE TRUCK'S BEEN HIT!!

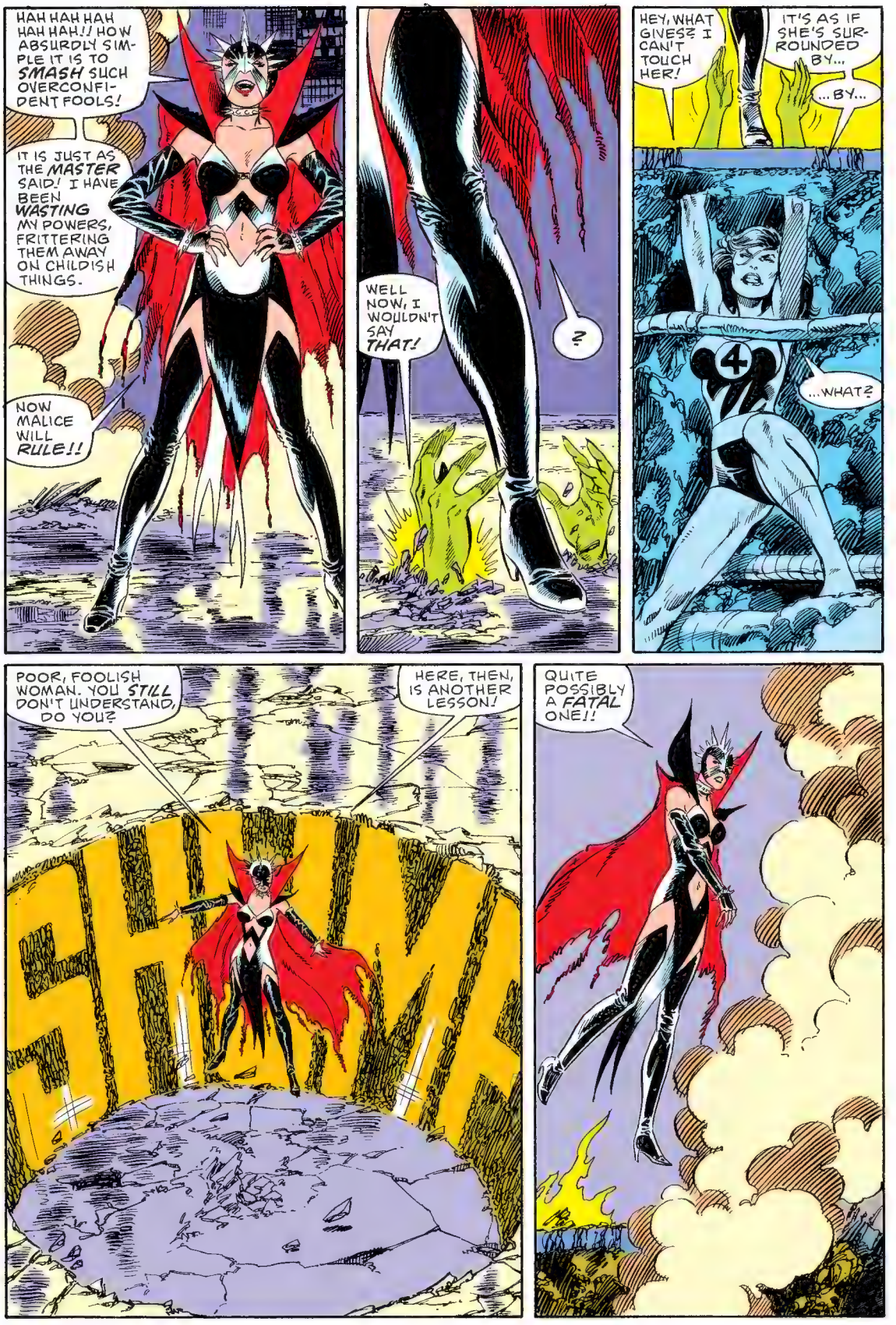
CAREFUL, MARTY! I DON'T THINK THIS IS THE ONE WE WANTED!
WHADELSE COULD IT BE, BOZO? WE FOUND OUT THEY WUZ MOVIN' CLETUS ALONG HERE TONIGHT, SO...
THIS MUST BE TH' RIGHT PADDY...
...WAGON...?
OKAY, TO COIN A PHRASE...
WHO'S THE WISE GUY?
HOO-LEE SPIT!!
JEN...THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!
LET 'EM, HONEY.
THEY'RE JUST ONE LITTLE SYMPTOM OF WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S TURNING THIS TOWN ON ITS COLLECTIVE EAR.
YOU LOOK AFTER MR. SHOENSTEIN AND OUR DRIVER AND GUARDS.
I'M GOING TO SCOOT ON OVER TO AVENGERS MANSION. THAT'S WHERE REED WILL HAVE GONE, I'M SURE.
I ONLY HOPE HE'S FIGURED SOMETHING OUT BY NOW.
'CAUSE IF HE HASN'T, IT MAY BE GAME OVER FOR THE WHOLE KIT AND KABOODLE.

YEAH, THAT'S THE ATTITUDE, JENNY-POO! POSITIVE THINKING!
ALTHOUGH IT'D BE TOUGH FOR ANYONE TO KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE STROLLING THROUGH HITLER'S BRAIN LIKE THIS.
LDMAN
JEWS
JEW
WHAT'S CAUSING IT ALL? THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN STUPID PREJUDICES, BIGOTRY AGAINST OTHER RACES, OTHER RELIGIONS.
EVEN IN THESE ENLIGHTENED TIMES THERE'S PROBABLY NOT A MAN OR WOMAN WHO HASN'T FELT THAT IRRATIONAL FEAR AND HATRED FLASH INSIDE THEM AT LEAST ONCE.
BUT WHY IS IT SUDDENLY ERUPTING NOW? WHY...
HEY!!

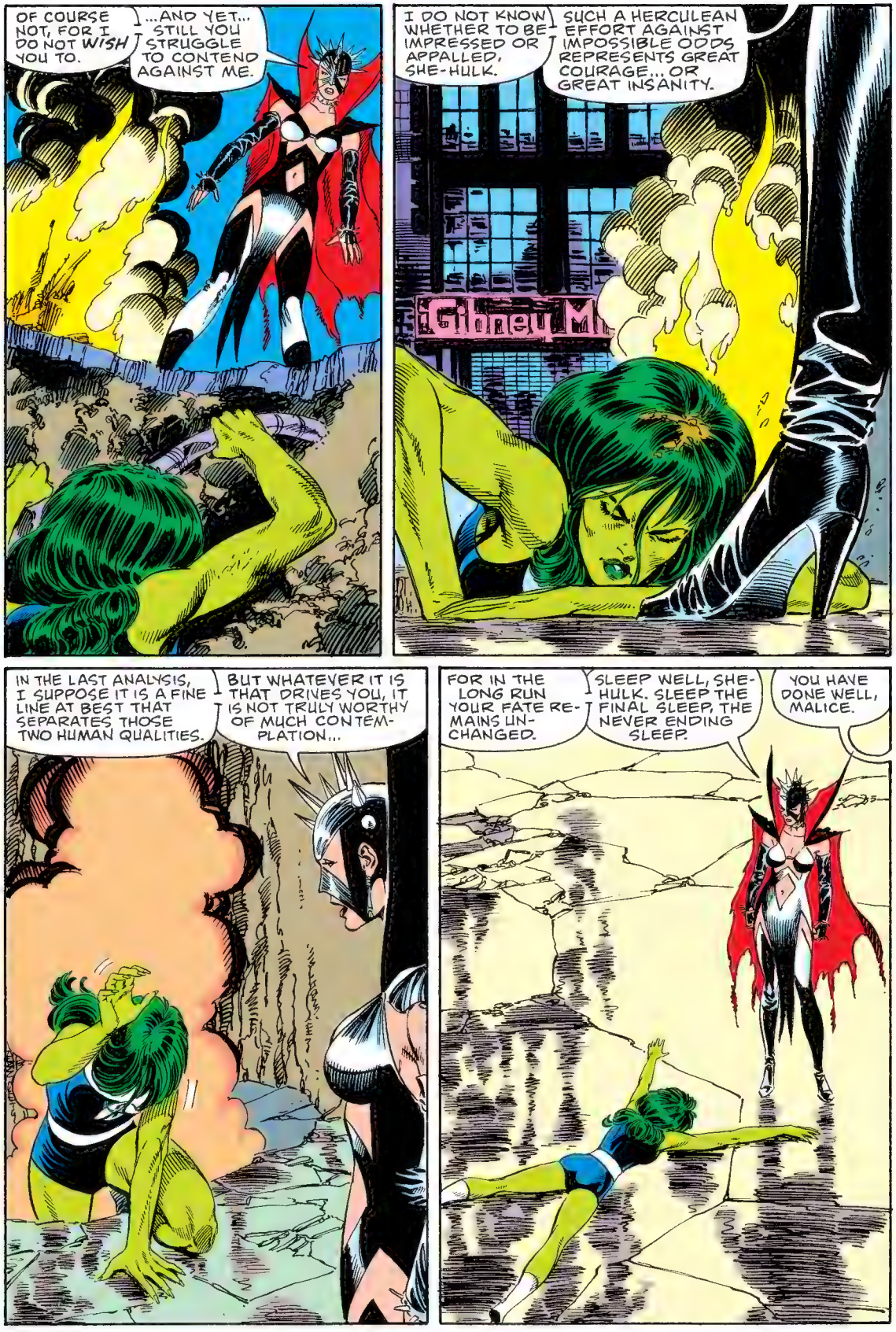
A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME, SHE-HULK.
THERE IS AN ORDEAL THROUGH WHICH YOU MUST PASS BEFORE YOU GO ANY FURTHER...
IF YOU GO ANY FURTHER, AFTER YOUR ULTIMATE DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF MALICE, MISTRESS OF HATE!
YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING!


EXCUSE ME IF I DON'T JUST TURN TO JELL-O ALL AT ONCE, BUT IT'D BE BAD FOR MY SELF-ESTEEM.
NOW JUST HOLD THAT POSE A SECOND AND I'LL DEMONSTRATE THAT IT TAKES MORE THAN SPECIAL EFFECTS AND THE LATEST ENSEMBLE FROM FREDERICKS OF HOLLYWOOD TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION IN THIS BURG.
IT TAKES POWER!!
THOOM!
?!?
YOU'RE STILL STANDING?! BUT THAT PUNCH WOULD HAVE STOPPED A CHARGING RHINO!
THEN I SUGGEST YOU SAVE IT FOR THE OCCASION WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF FACING SUCH A BEAST.
FOR IT WILL SERVE YOU NAUGHT AGAINST ME!
AS YOU WILL NOW LEARN!
...UH OH...

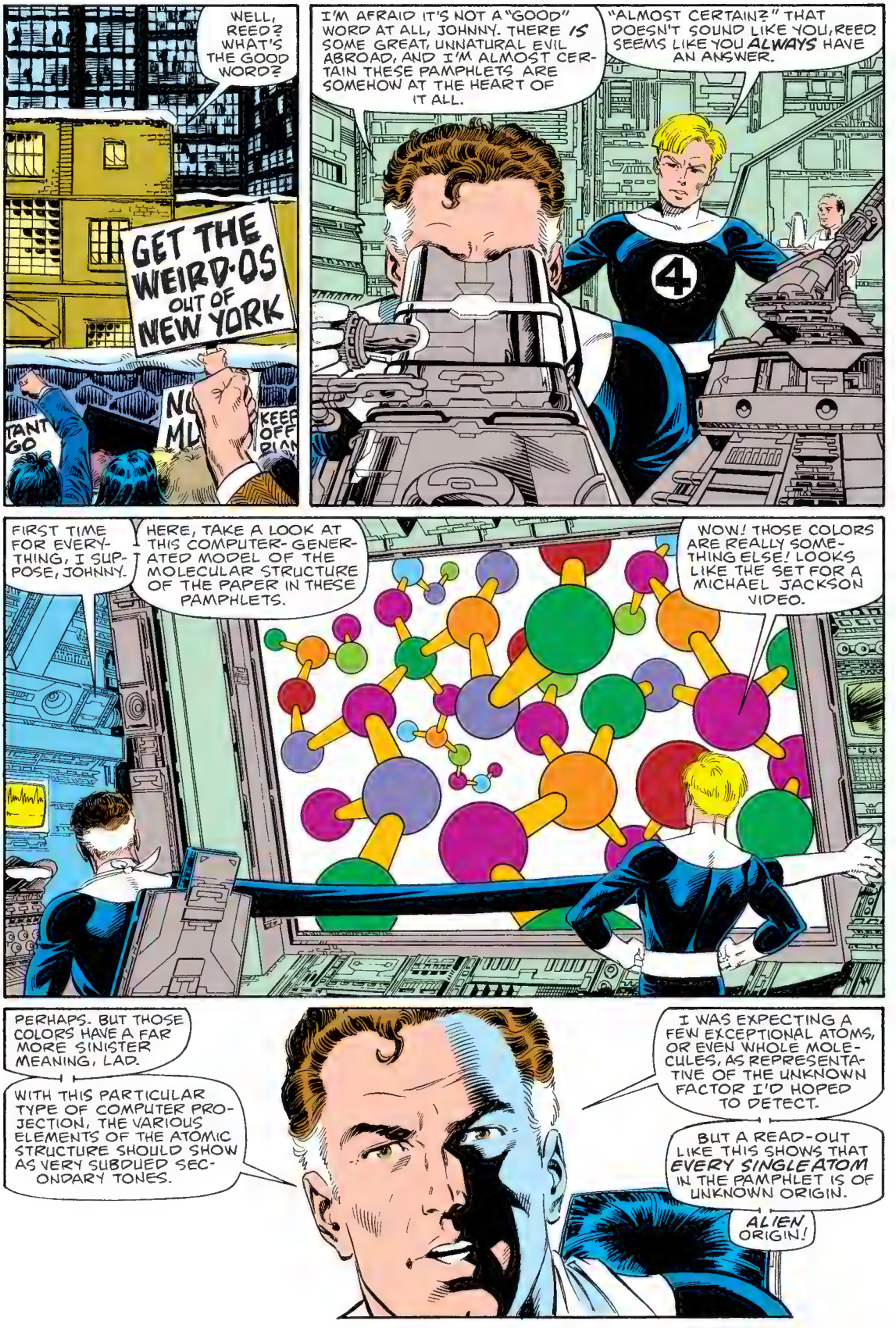
WHOAH!
SCOT
SURRENDER NOW, SHE-HULK, AND PERHAPS I SHALL GRANT YOU A QUICK AND EASY DEATH.
YOU HAVE NO OTHER HOPE, FOR YOU HAVE NEVER FACED POWERS LIKE MINE.
NEVER!!
OOOHHH...
...DRAT!!

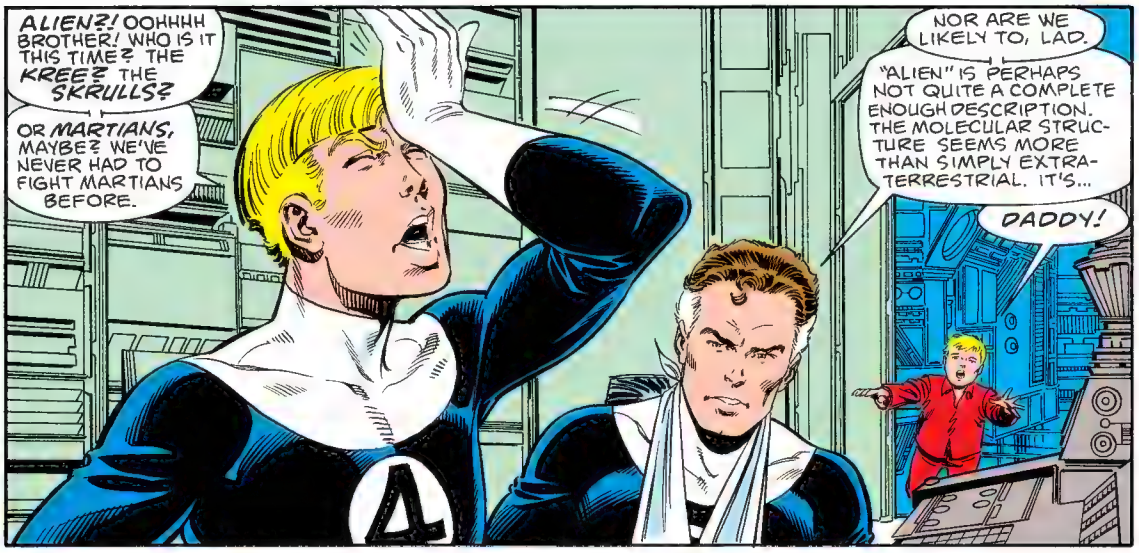

HAH HAH HAH HAH HAH!! HOW ABSURDLY SIMPLE IT IS TO SMASH SUCH OVERCONFIDENT FOOLS!
IT IS JUST AS THE MASTER SAID! I HAVE BEEN WASTING MY POWERS, FRITTERING THEM AWAY ON CHILDISH THINGS.
NOW MALICE WILL RULE!!
WELL NOW, I WOULDN'T SAY THAT!
?
HEY, WHAT GIVES? I CAN'T TOUCH HER!
IT'S AS IF SHE'S SURROUNDED BY...
...BY...
...WHAT?
POOR, FOOLISH WOMAN. YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU?
HERE, THEN, IS ANOTHER LESSON!
QUITE POSSIBLY A FATAL ONE!!

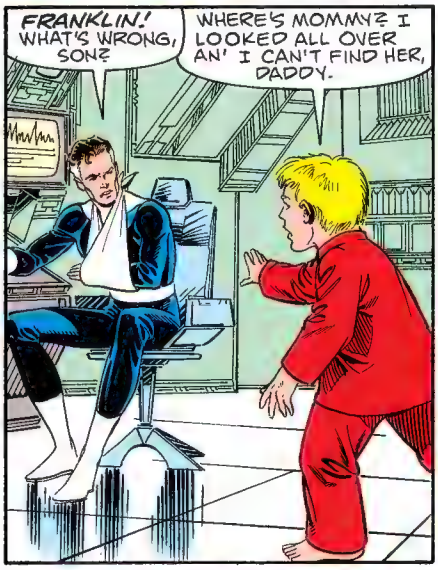
...HOLD...
...IT...
DON'T... COUNT YOUR CORPSES... UNTIL THEY'VE STOPPED KICKING, NEEDLE-HEAD.
IF I LET A... LITTLE THING LIKE THIS... SLOW ME DOWN, THEY'D TAKE AWAY... MY GOOD-GUY UNION CARD.
REMARKABLE! I KNOW YOU'RE STRONG, SHE-HULK. POTENTIALLY AS STRONG AS THE HULK HIMSELF, PERHAPS.
BUT YOUR RESILIANCE NOW SURPRISES EVEN ME. HOWEVER, THERE STILL REMAINS ONE THING EVEN YOU CANNOT PREVAIL AGAINST.
AS IT ONCE HALTED THE GAMMA-SPAWNED POWER OF YOUR COUSIN...*
...SO IT WILL NOW STOP YOU!
!?!
I... CAN'T... BREATHE...?
*AS JENNIFER WALTERS, SHE-HULK IS FIRST-COUSIN TO BRUCE BANNER, THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

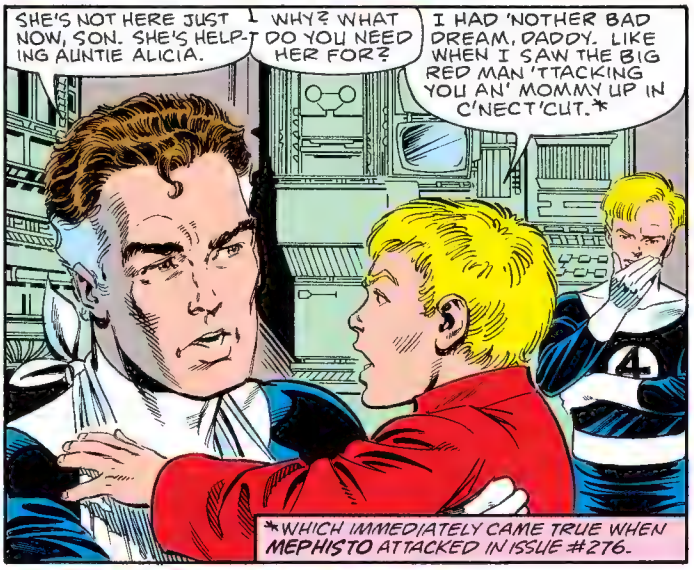

OF COURSE NOT, FOR I DO NOT WISH YOU TO.
...AND YET... STILL YOU STRUGGLE TO CONTEND AGAINST ME.
I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER TO BE IMPRESSED OR APPALLED, SHE-HULK.
SUCH A HERCULEAN EFFORT AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS REPRESENTS GREAT COURAGE... OR GREAT INSANITY.
Gibney M
IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, I SUPPOSE IT IS A FINE LINE AT BEST THAT SEPARATES THOSE TWO HUMAN QUALITIES.
BUT WHATEVER IT IS THAT DRIVES YOU, IT IS NOT TRULY WORTHY OF MUCH CONTEMPLATION...
FOR IN THE LONG RUN YOUR FATE REMAINS UNCHANGED.
SLEEP WELL, SHE-HULK. SLEEP THE FINAL SLEEP, THE NEVER ENDING SLEEP.
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, MALICE.

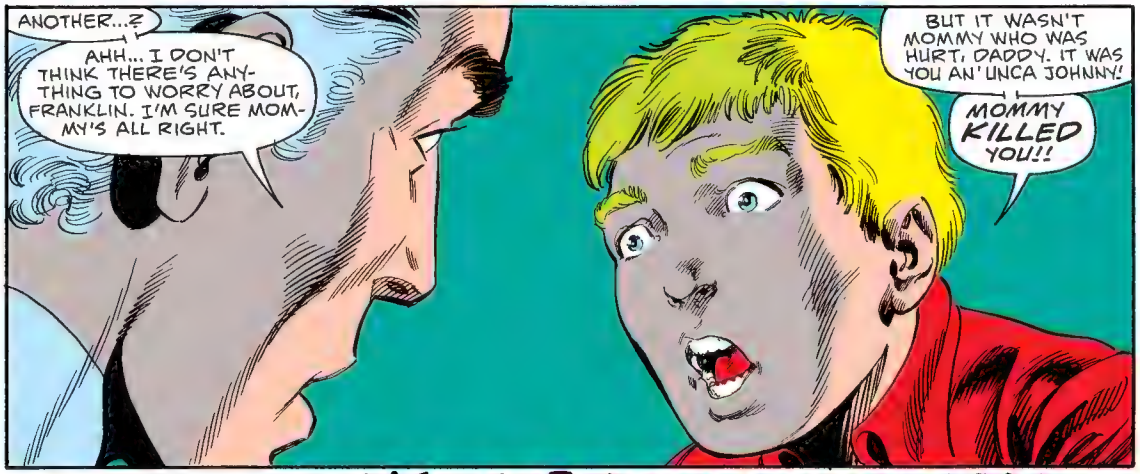
YOU! AT LAST! NOW I CAN...
NO, MALICE, WAIT! WAIT! I AM NOT WHO YOU THINK I AM, REMEMBER?
YOU MUST NOT ATTACK SIMPLY BECAUSE I WEAR THE FACE OF THE MAN YOU MOST HATE IN THE WORLD.
SEE? IT IS EASY ENOUGH FOR ME TO ADOPT ANOTHER FACE--ANY FACE AND FORM I MIGHT WISH.
AHH, YES. DOCTOR UNGER. I APOLOGIZE FOR MY RASH BEHAVIOR. BUT YOU, YOURSELF, HAVE SHOWN ME THE PATH I NOW WALK, THE ONE TRUE PATH OF HATE!
YES, MY DEAR. OF COURSE. I HAVE RAISED THE ANCIENT CURSE ACROSS THE LENGTH OF THIS CITY, AND SOON IT WILL SPREAD OUT, SPILLING ACROSS THE NATION, AND THE WORLD!
VANDERNET
AND IF THERE SURVIVES A HAND TO SOMEDAY WRITE THE HISTORY OF THESE TIMES, LET US HOPE HE WILL RECORD YOUR TALE, THE STORY OF MY GREATEST SUCCESS, THE GREATEST TRIUMPH OF THE HATE-MONGER...
...THE RECRUITING TO THE WAYS OF HATE OF SUSAN STORM RICHARDS, THE INVISIBLE GIRL!!!


WELL, REED? WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD?
GET THE WEIRD-OS OUT OF NEW YORK
I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT A "GOOD" WORD AT ALL, JOHNNY. THERE IS SOME GREAT, UNNATURAL EVIL ABROAD, AND I'M ALMOST CERTAIN THESE PAMPHLETS ARE SOMEHOW AT THE HEART OF IT ALL.
"ALMOST CERTAIN?" THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE YOU, REED. SEEMS LIKE YOU ALWAYS HAVE AN ANSWER.
4
FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING, I SUPPOSE, JOHNNY.
HERE, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS COMPUTER-GENERATED MODEL OF THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER IN THESE PAMPHLETS.
WOW! THOSE COLORS ARE REALLY SOMETHING ELSE! LOOKS LIKE THE SET FOR A MICHAEL JACKSON VIDEO.
PERHAPS. BUT THOSE COLORS HAVE A FAR MORE SINISTER MEANING, LAD.
WITH THIS PARTICULAR TYPE OF COMPUTER PROJECTION, THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE ATOMIC STRUCTURE SHOULD SHOW AS VERY SUBDUED SECONDARY TONES.
I WAS EXPECTING A FEW EXCEPTIONAL ATOMS, OR EVEN WHOLE MOLECULES, AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNKNOWN FACTOR I'D HOPED TO DETECT.
BUT A READ-OUT LIKE THIS SHOWS THAT EVERY SINGLE ATOM IN THE PAMPHLET IS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN.
ALIEN ORIGIN!


ALIEN?! OOHHHH BROTHER! WHO IS IT THIS TIME? THE KREE? THE SKRULLS?
OR MARTIANS, MAYBE? WE'VE NEVER HAD TO FIGHT MARTIANS BEFORE.
NOR ARE WE LIKELY TO, LAD.
"ALIEN" IS PERHAPS NOT QUITE A COMPLETE ENOUGH DESCRIPTION. THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE SEEMS MORE THAN SIMPLY EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL. IT'S...
DADDY!




SHE'S NOT HERE JUST NOW, SON. SHE'S HELPING AUNTIE ALICIA.
WHY? WHAT DO YOU NEED HER FOR?
I HAD 'NOTHER BAD DREAM, DADDY. LIKE WHEN I SAW THE BIG RED MAN 'TTACKING YOU AN' MOMMY UP IN C'NECT'CUT.*
*WHICH IMMEDIATELY CAME TRUE WHEN MEPHISTO ATTACKED IN ISSUE #276.


ANOTHER...?
AHH... I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, FRANKLIN. I'M SURE MOMMY'S ALL RIGHT.
BUT IT WASN'T MOMMY WHO WAS HURT, DADDY. IT WAS YOU AN' UNCA JOHNNY!
MOMMY KILLED YOU!!

NEXT ISSUE: WILL FRANKLIN'S STRANGE DREAM COME TRUE AGAIN? HAS THE **HATE-MONGER** REALLY TRIUMPHED? DON'T MISS...

WITH MALICE TOWARDS ALL IN 30 DAYS!

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
BYRNE & ORDWAY

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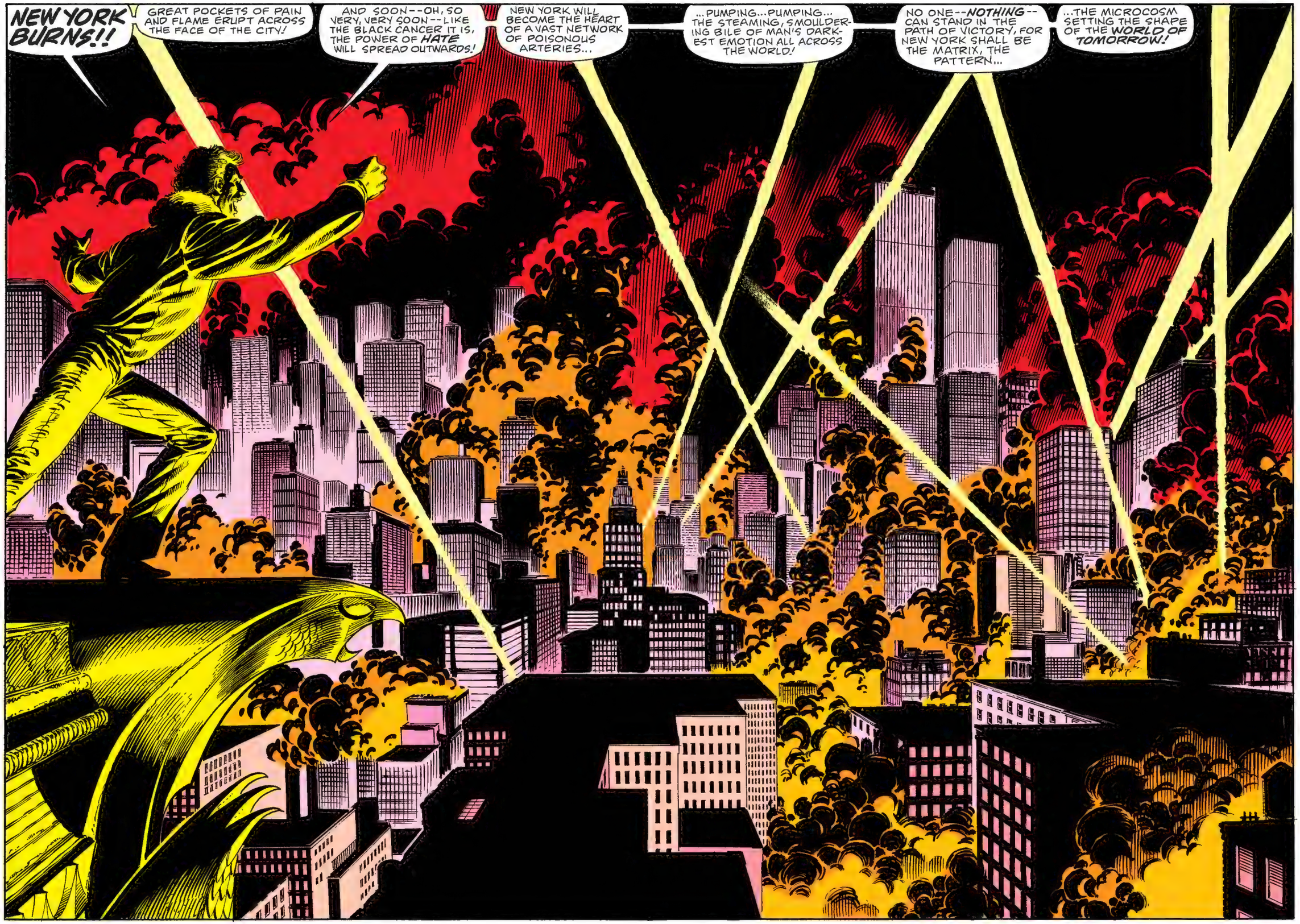
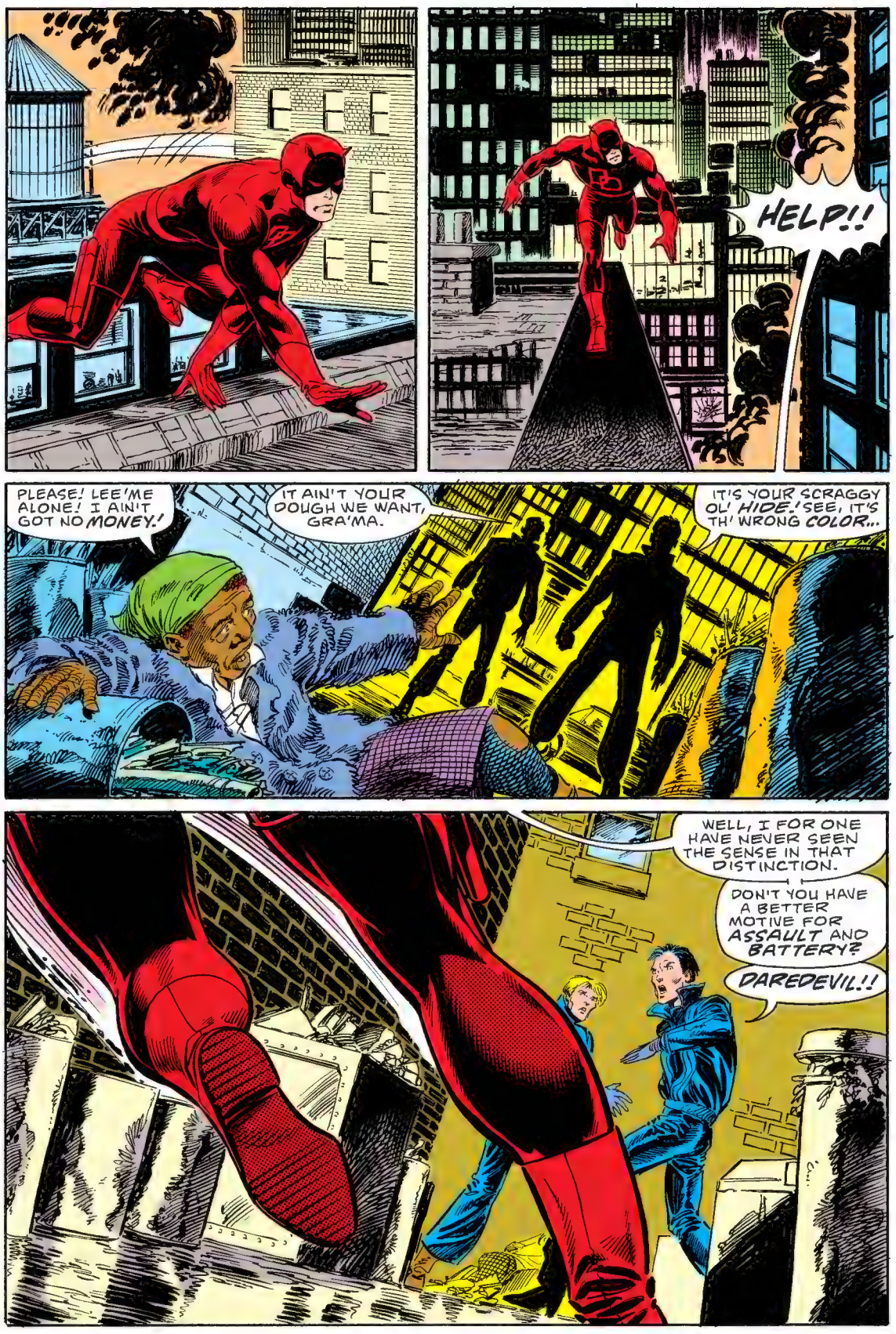
JOHN BYRNE STORY AND PENCILS
JERRY ORDWAY INKS
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORS
JOHN WORKMAN LETTERER
MIKE CARLIN EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF
WITH MALICE TOWARDS ALL!
THE LEGIONS OF HATE ARE TRIUMPHANT! NO ONE CAN STAND BEFORE US!
SO SPEAKS THE HATE-MONGER!


NEW YORK BURNS!!
GREAT POCKETS OF PAIN AND FLAME ERUPT ACROSS THE FACE OF THE CITY!
AND SOON--OH, SO VERY, VERY SOON--LIKE THE BLACK CANCER IT IS, THE POWER OF HATE WILL SPREAD OUTWARDS!
NEW YORK WILL BECOME THE HEART OF A VAST NETWORK OF POISONOUS ARTERIES...
...PUMPING...PUMPING... THE STEAMING, SMOULDERING BILE OF MAN'S DARKEST EMOTION ALL ACROSS THE WORLD!
NO ONE--NOTHING--CAN STAND IN THE PATH OF VICTORY, FOR NEW YORK SHALL BE THE MATRIX, THE PATTERN...
...THE MICROCOSM SETTING THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD OF TOMORROW!

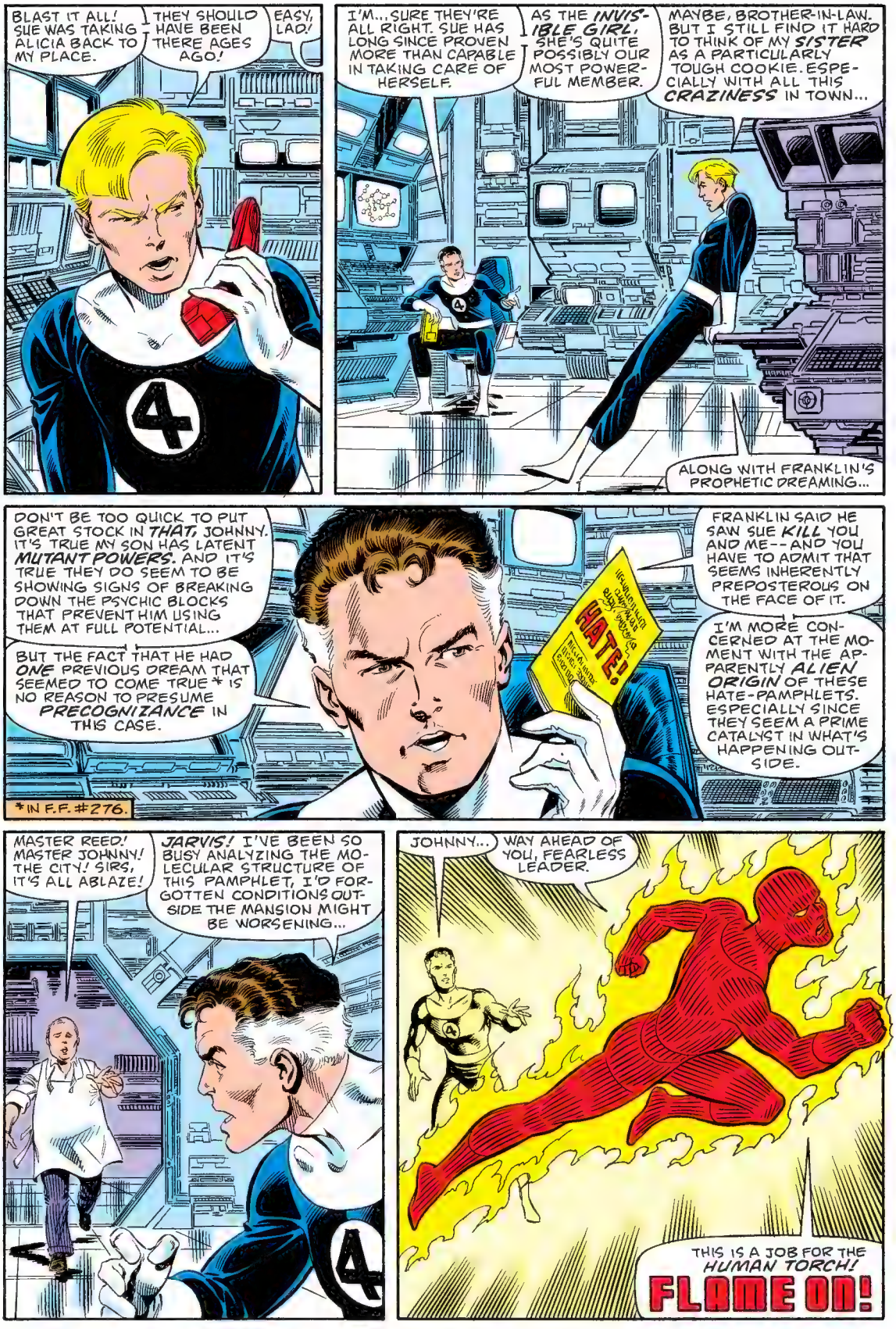
NO ONE IS IMMUNE! NO ONE CAN ESCAPE! MAN OR WOMAN, ADULT OR CHILD!
ALL WHO EVEN ONCE IN THEIR LIVES FELT THE HOT FLASH OF HATE NOW FEEL THAT EMBER FANNED TO A BLAZING INFERNO!
"THE ANCIENT ENVIES, THE ALMOST TRIBAL PREJUDICES...
"ALL ACROSS THE CITY EACH TINY TABLEAU REPEATS AND REPEATS, WEAVING INTO A MASSIVE TAPESTRY OF HATRED!
"MAN AGAINST WOMAN...
"...CHILD AGAINST PARENT...
"...BLACK AGAINST WHITE...
"...JEW AGAINST GENTILE...
"...BLONDE AGAINST BRUNETTE, BLUE EYES AGAINST BROWN...
"THERE IS NOT A SINGLE HUMAN PREJUDICE, HOWEVER SMALL, THAT HAS NOT GROWN INTO A JUGGERNAUT!"

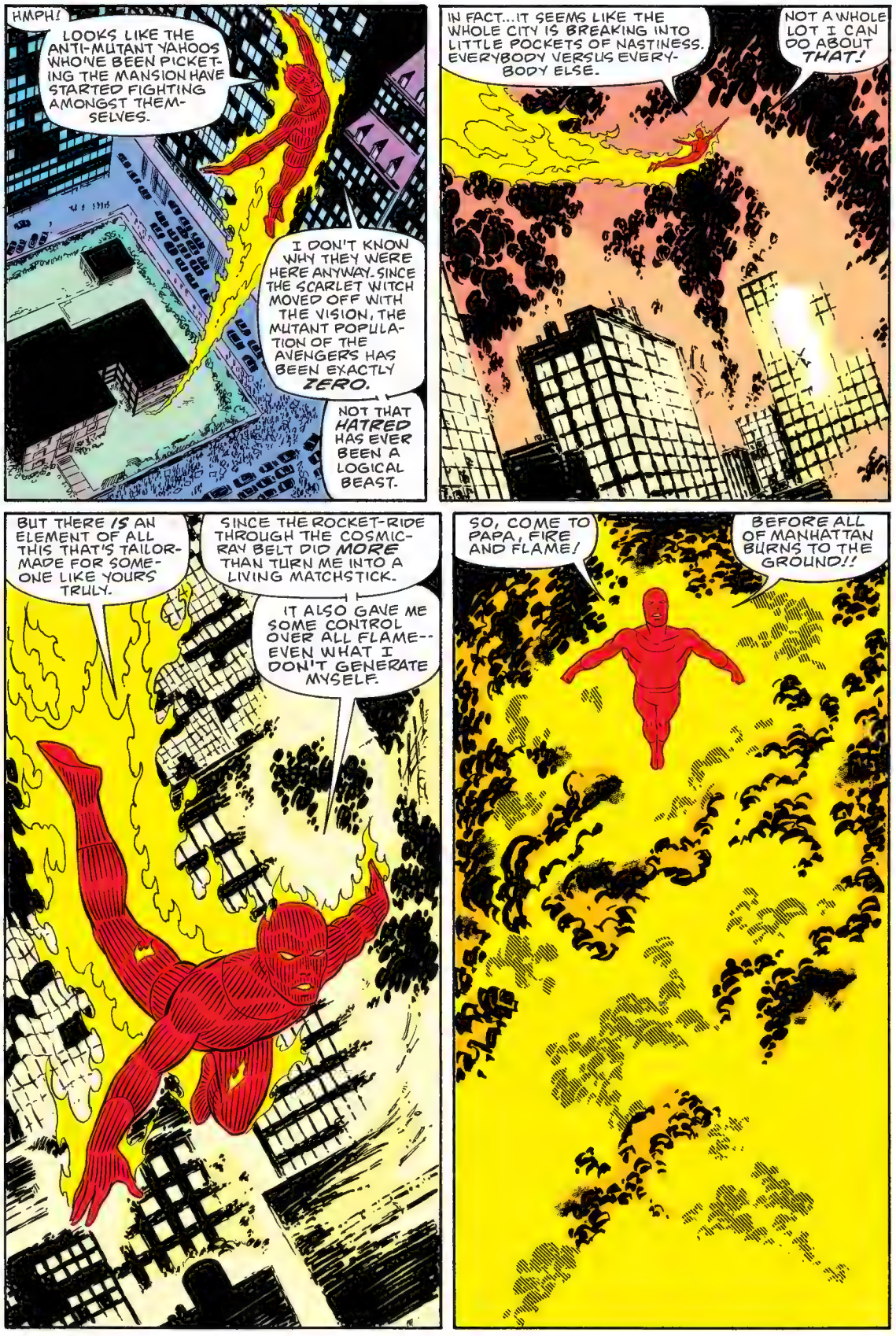
YET, EVEN SO COMPLETE A VICTORY ALMOST PALES TO INSIGNIFICANCE BEFORE THE GREATEST TRIUMPH!
THE WINNING OVER OF THE WOMAN WHO NOW CALLS HERSELF MALICE, MISTRESS OF HATE!
YES...
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, UNGER. VERY WELL INDEED. YOU HAVE BEEN A TRUE ARTIST, PAINTING WITH STROKES BROAD AND INSPIRED UPON THE CANVAS I PRESENTED.
THE MASTER PLAN HAS SUCCEEDED EVEN BEYOND MY EXPECTATIONS.
NOW LET US PROCEED WITH THE CORE OF THE PLAN, THE HUB ABOUT WHICH ALL REVOLVES...
THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
YES, MASTER!
AND WHAT BETTER IRONY THAN TO NOW DISPATCH MALICE TO ACCOMPLISH THAT END.
YOU'D LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T YOU, MY PRETTY?
BUT OF COURSE! WAS IT NOT THAT VERY PROMISE, TO SLAY THOSE I MOST DESPISE, THAT LURED ME TO THE PATHS OF HATE?

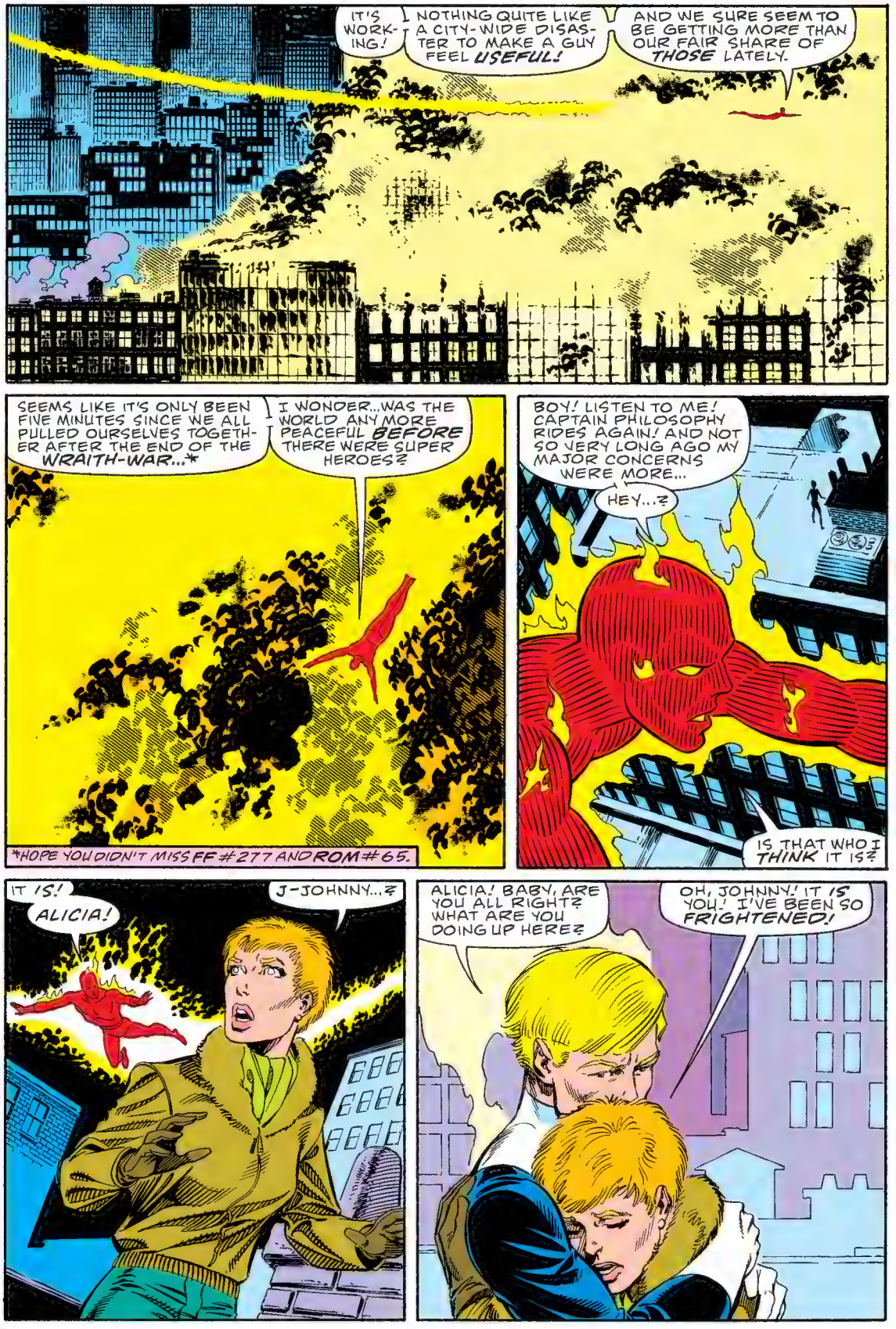
THUS, I GO.
AND BEFORE THE NIGHT IS ENDED...
...THE FANTASTIC FOUR SHALL BE NO MORE!
SHE SCARCELY KNOWS THE INSIDIOUS TRUTH OF HER WORDS! ALREADY, THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO HALF THEIR FORCE. THE SHE-HULK HAS ALREADY FALLEN...*
AND MALICE HERSELF...
YES.
BUT GUARD AGAINST OVER-CONFIDENCE, HATE-MONGER. I HAVE BATTLED THIS ACCURSED FOURSOME BEFORE. I SHALL NOT COUNT OUR VICTORY ASSURED UNTIL I SEE THEIR HEADS ON SPEARS!
REMEMBER, TO MAKE MORE SWEET MY FINAL VICTORY, I HAVE ALLOWED THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR TO REMAIN IMMUNE TO MY MACHINATIONS.
*LAST ISSUE.
"WE CANNOT, THEREFORE, BE CERTAIN THERE IS NO ONE ELSE WHO HAS ESCAPED OUR INFLUENCE..."

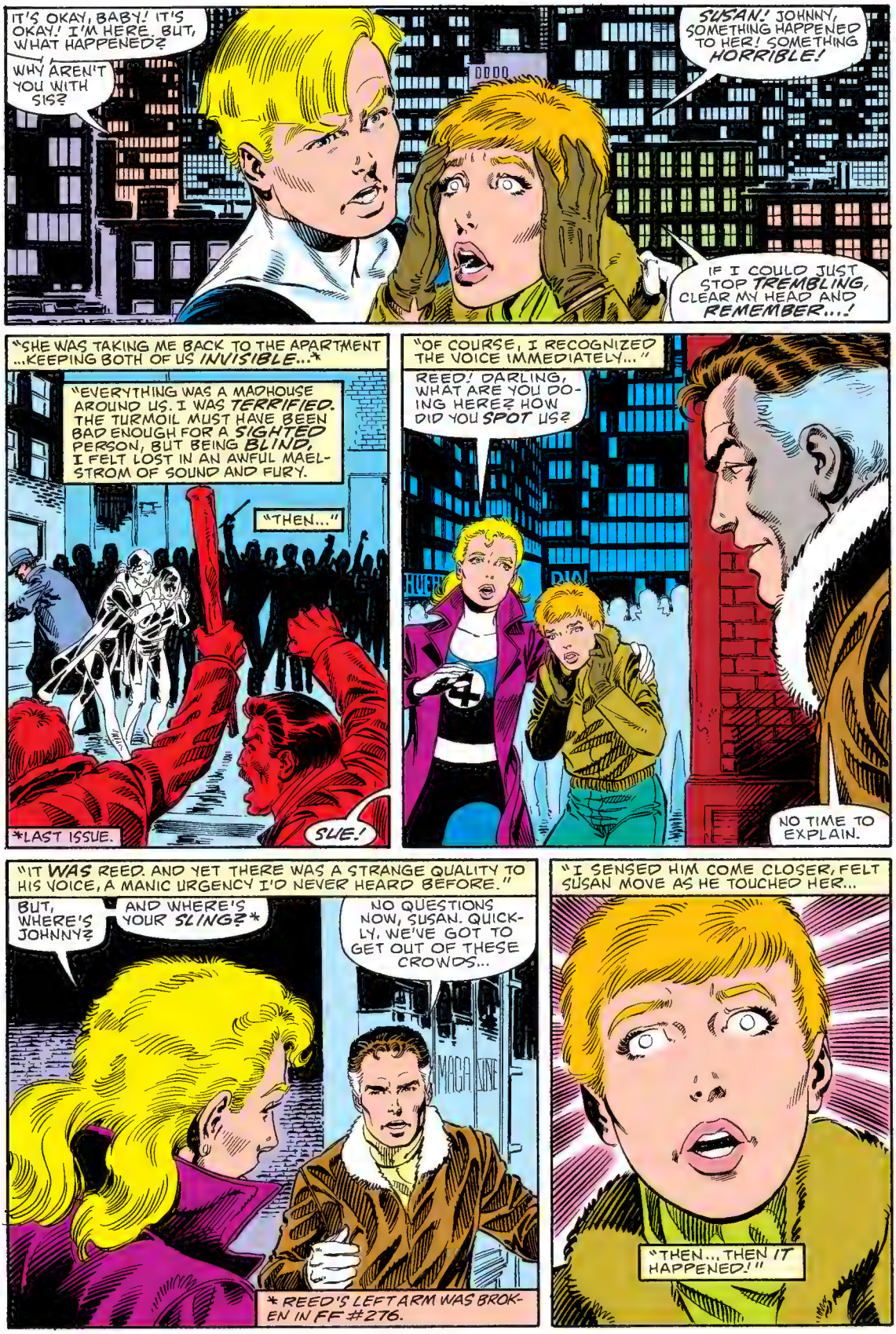

HELP!!
PLEASE! LEE'ME ALONE! I AIN'T GOT NO MONEY!
IT AIN'T YOUR DOUGH WE WANT, GRA'MA.
IT'S YOUR SCRAGGY OL' HIDE. SEE, IT'S TH' WRONG COLOR...
WELL, I FOR ONE HAVE NEVER SEEN THE SENSE IN THAT DISTINCTION.
DON'T YOU HAVE A BETTER MOTIVE FOR ASSAULT AND BATTERY?
DAREDEVIL!!

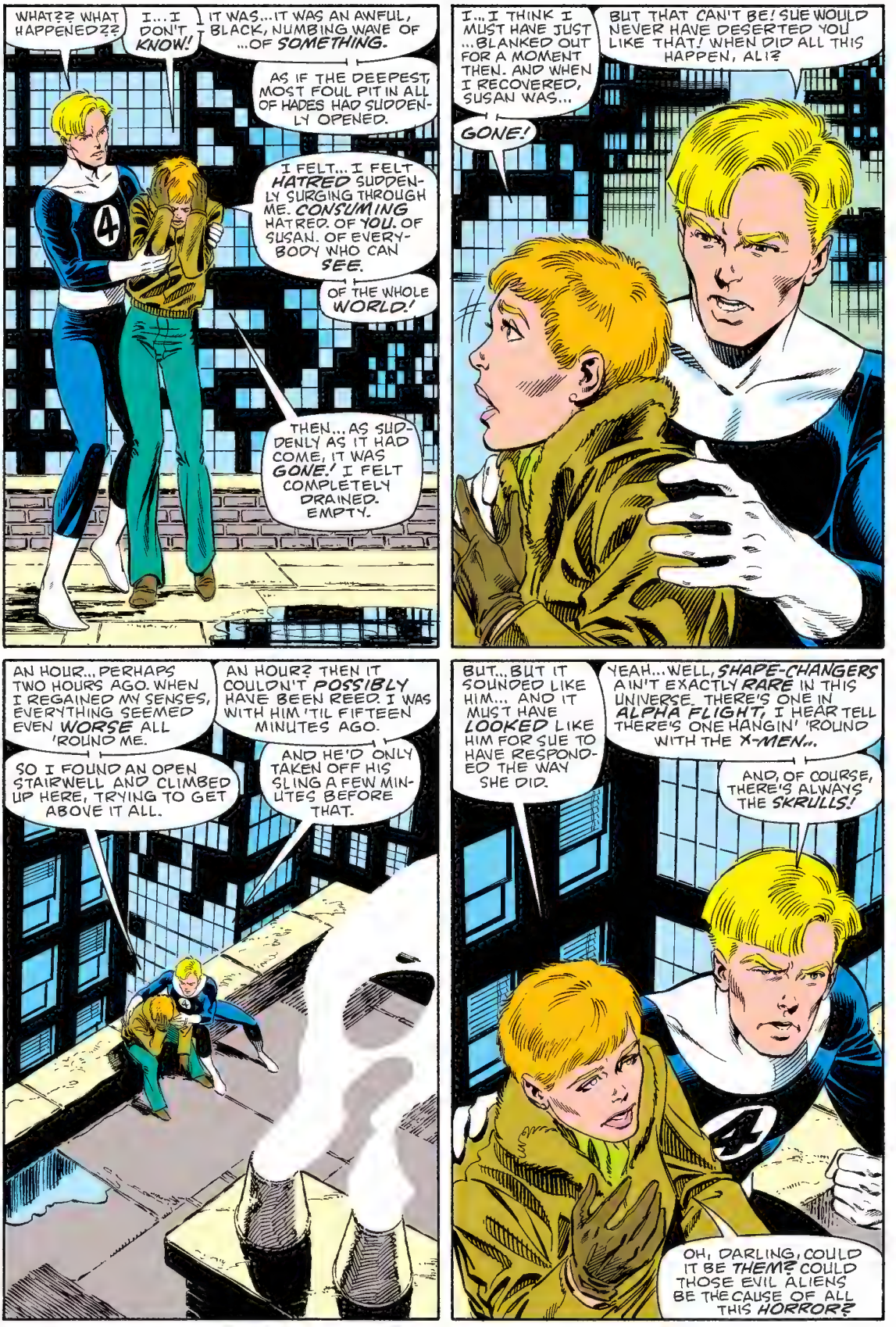
ALWAYS FLATTERED TO BE RECOGNIZED, FRIEND.
PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE ME TO LEAVE MY AUTOGRAPH WITH THE POLICE FOR YOU.
YOU CAN ASK 'EM FOR IT WHEN YOU REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS!
OOOFF!
OW!
ALL RIGHT NOW, MA'M. THOSE TWO WON'T BE BOTHERING YOU AG...
HEY!
DON' TOUCH ME! I DON'T WANT NO JIVE HONKY TOUCHIN' ME!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF...?
'SPECIALLY DON' WANT NO SUPER-FREAK COMIN' NOWHERES NEAR ME!
JUST YOU LE'ME BE!
OHH-KAY! WAKEY-WAKEY, YOU TWO! TIME TO TAKE A QUICK STROLL TO THE NEAREST PRECINCT HOUSE. HOPEFULLY THE POLICE WILL HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHY THIS CITY HAS SUDDENLY GONE MAD!
AND IF THEY DON'T... WELL, THERE'S ONE PLACE I'M SURE I CAN FIND SOME ANSWERS...
"...AVENGERS MANSION!"*
THERE'S NO ANSWER, REED.
*WHERE THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE RESIDING SINCE THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR H.Q. IN ISSUE #s 278-279.

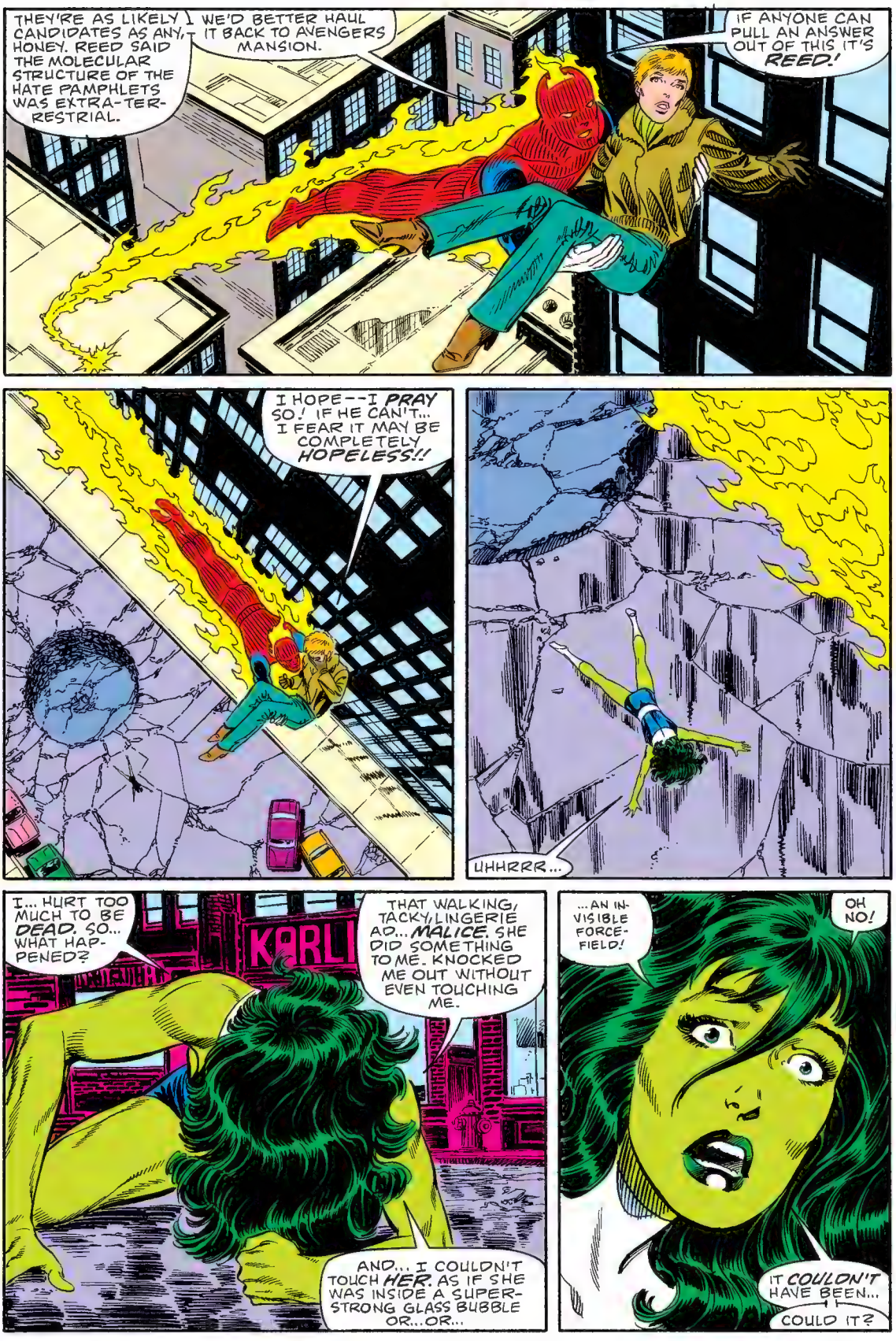

BLAST IT ALL! SUE WAS TAKING ALICIA BACK TO MY PLACE.
THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE AGES AGO!
EASY, LAD!
I'M...SURE THEY'RE ALL RIGHT. SUE HAS LONG SINCE PROVEN MORE THAN CAPABLE IN TAKING CARE OF HERSELF.
AS THE INVISIBLE GIRL, SHE'S QUITE POSSIBLY OUR MOST POWERFUL MEMBER.
MAYBE, BROTHER-IN-LAW. BUT I STILL FIND IT HARD TO THINK OF MY SISTER AS A PARTICULARLY TOUGH COOKIE. ESPECIALLY WITH ALL THIS CRAZINESS IN TOWN...
ALONG WITH FRANKLIN'S PROPHETIC DREAMING...
DON'T BE TOO QUICK TO PUT GREAT STOCK IN THAT, JOHNNY. IT'S TRUE MY SON HAS LATENT MUTANT POWERS. AND IT'S TRUE THEY DO SEEM TO BE SHOWING SIGNS OF BREAKING DOWN THE PSYCHIC BLOCKS THAT PREVENT HIM USING THEM AT FULL POTENTIAL...
BUT THE FACT THAT HE HAD ONE PREVIOUS DREAM THAT SEEMED TO COME TRUE * IS NO REASON TO PRESUME PRECOGNIZANCE IN THIS CASE.
*IN F.F. #276.
HATE!
FRANKLIN SAID HE SAW SUE KILL YOU AND ME--AND YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT SEEMS INHERENTLY PREPOSTEROUS ON THE FACE OF IT.
I'M MORE CONCERNED AT THE MOMENT WITH THE APPARENTLY ALIEN ORIGIN OF THESE HATE-PAMPHLETS. ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY SEEM A PRIME CATALYST IN WHAT'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE.
MASTER REED! MASTER JOHNNY! THE CITY! SIRS, IT'S ALL ABLAZE!
JARVIS! I'VE BEEN SO BUSY ANALYZING THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THIS PAMPHLET, I'D FORGOTTEN CONDITIONS OUTSIDE THE MANSION MIGHT BE WORSENING...
JOHNNY...
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, FEARLESS LEADER.
THIS IS A JOB FOR THE HUMAN TORCH!
FLAME ON!


HMPH!
LOOKS LIKE THE ANTI-MUTANT YAHOOS WHO'VE BEEN PICKETING THE MANSION HAVE STARTED FIGHTING AMONGST THEMSELVES.
I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY WERE HERE ANYWAY. SINCE THE SCARLET WITCH MOVED OFF WITH THE VISION, THE MUTANT POPULATION OF THE AVENGERS HAS BEEN EXACTLY ZERO.
NOT THAT HATRED HAS EVER BEEN A LOGICAL BEAST.
IN FACT...IT SEEMS LIKE THE WHOLE CITY IS BREAKING INTO LITTLE POCKETS OF NASTINESS. EVERYBODY VERSUS EVERYBODY ELSE.
NOT A WHOLE LOT I CAN DO ABOUT THAT!
BUT THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF ALL THIS THAT'S TAILOR-MADE FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOURS TRULY.
SINCE THE ROCKET-RIDE THROUGH THE COSMIC-RAY BELT DID MORE THAN TURN ME INTO A LIVING MATCHSTICK.
IT ALSO GAVE ME SOME CONTROL OVER ALL FLAME--EVEN WHAT I DON'T GENERATE MYSELF.
SO, COME TO PAPA, FIRE AND FLAME!
BEFORE ALL OF MANHATTAN BURNS TO THE GROUND!!

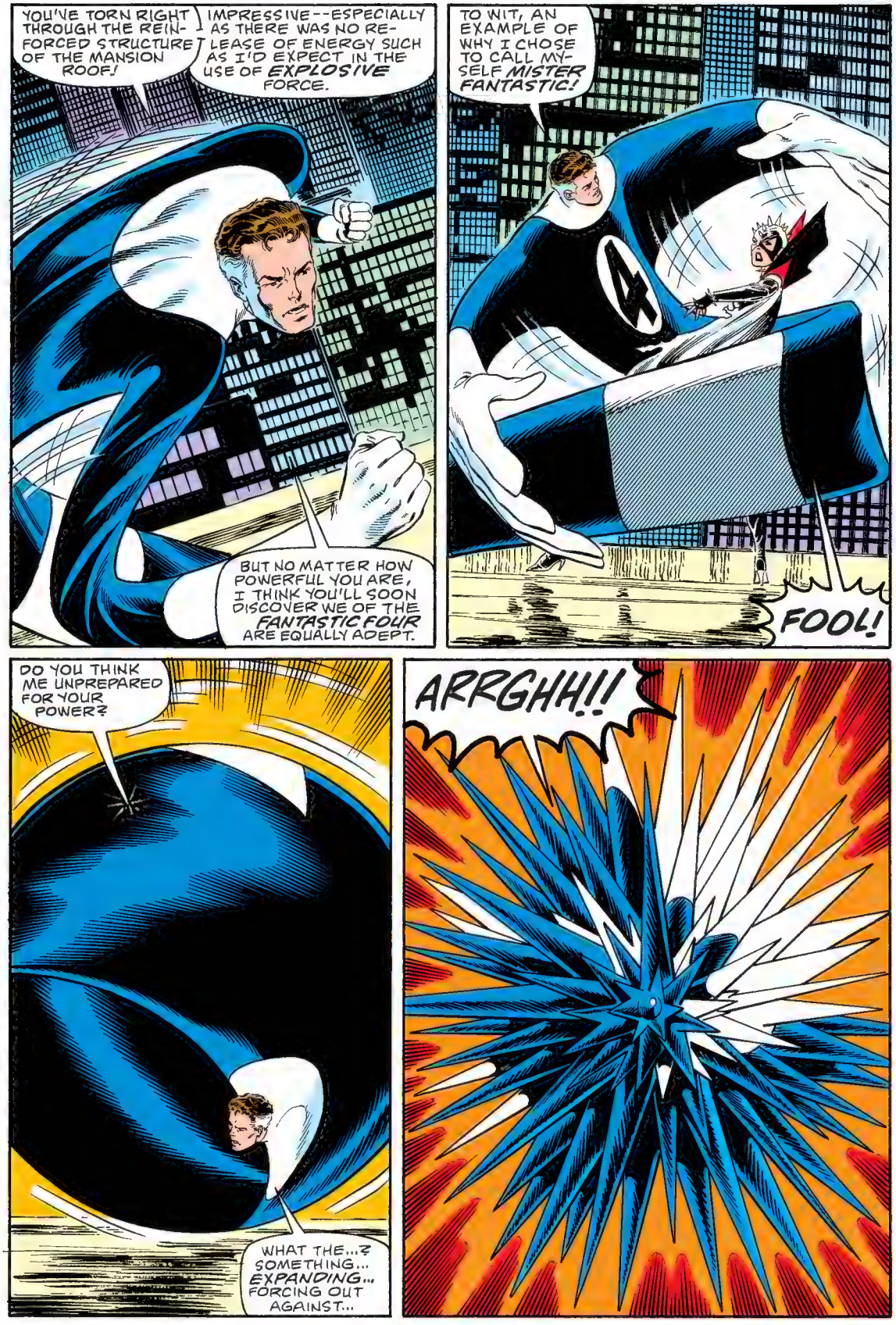

IT'S WORKING!
NOTHING QUITE LIKE A CITY-WIDE DISASTER TO MAKE A GUY FEEL USEFUL!
AND WE SURE SEEM TO BE GETTING MORE THAN OUR FAIR SHARE OF THOSE LATELY.
SEEMS LIKE IT'S ONLY BEEN FIVE MINUTES SINCE WE ALL PULLED OURSELVES TOGETHER AFTER THE END OF THE WRAITH-WAR...*
I WONDER...WAS THE WORLD ANY MORE PEACEFUL BEFORE THERE WERE SUPER HEROES?
*HOPE YOU DIDN'T MISS FF #277 AND ROM #65.
BOY! LISTEN TO ME! CAPTAIN PHILOSOPHY RIDES AGAIN! AND NOT SO VERY LONG AGO MY MAJOR CONCERNS WERE MORE...
HEY...?
IS THAT WHO I THINK IT IS?
IT IS!
ALICIA!
J-JOHNNY...?
ALICIA! BABY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP HERE?
OH, JOHNNY! IT IS YOU! I'VE BEEN SO FRIGHTENED!

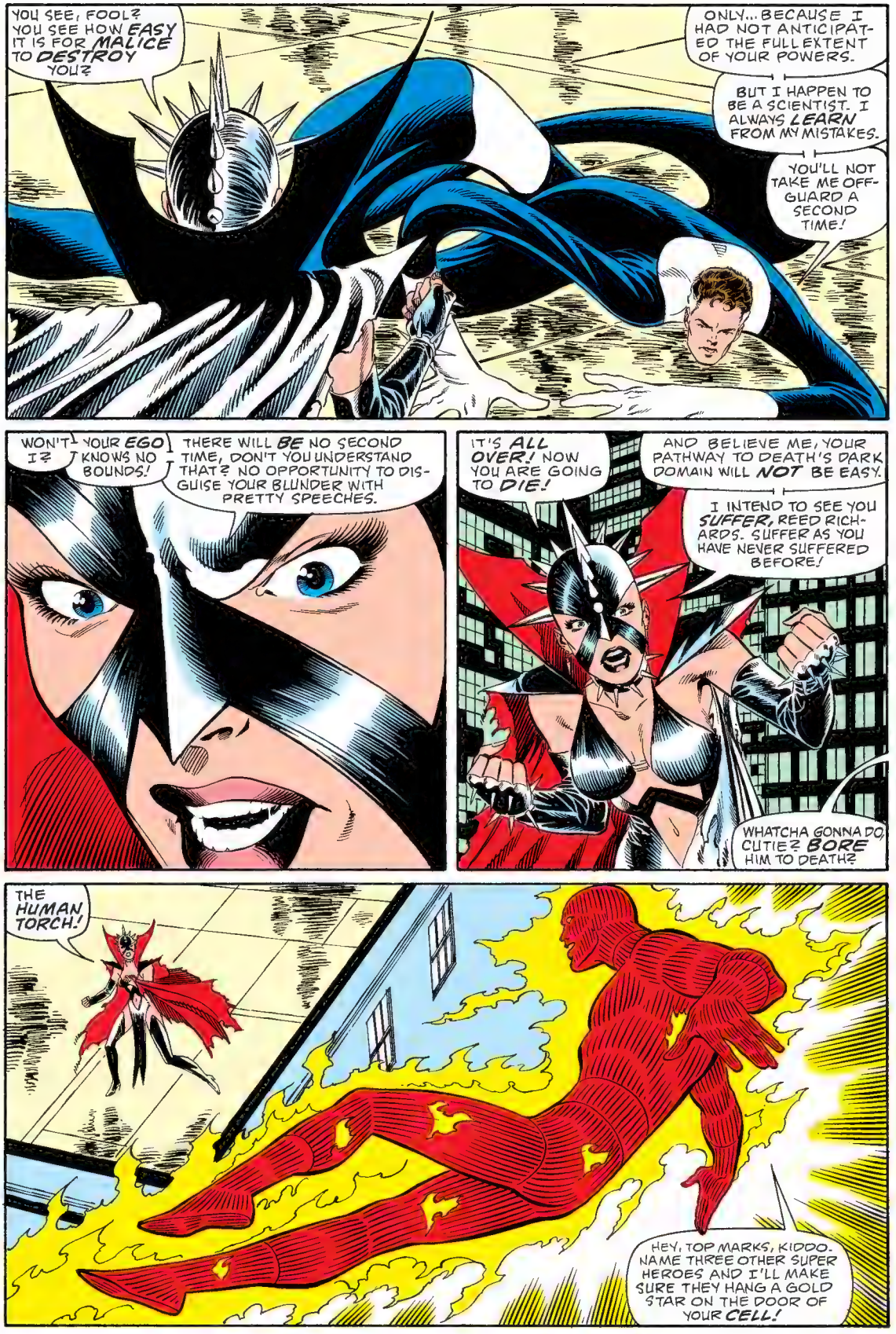

IT'S OKAY, BABY! IT'S OKAY! I'M HERE. BUT, WHAT HAPPENED?
WHY AREN'T YOU WITH SIS?
SUSAN! JOHNNY, SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER! SOMETHING HORRIBLE!
IF I COULD JUST STOP TREMBLING, CLEAR MY HEAD AND REMEMBER...!
"SHE WAS TAKING ME BACK TO THE APARTMENT ...KEEPING BOTH OF US INVISIBLE...*
"EVERYTHING WAS A MADHOUSE AROUND US. I WAS TERRIFIED. THE TURMOIL MUST HAVE BEEN BAD ENOUGH FOR A SIGHTED PERSON, BUT BEING BLIND, I FELT LOST IN AN AWFUL MAELSTROM OF SOUND AND FURY.
"THEN..."
SUE!
*LAST ISSUE.
"OF COURSE, I RECOGNIZED THE VOICE IMMEDIATELY..."
REED! DARLING, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? HOW DID YOU SPOT US?
NO TIME TO EXPLAIN.
"IT WAS REED. AND YET THERE WAS A STRANGE QUALITY TO HIS VOICE, A MANIC URGENCY I'D NEVER HEARD BEFORE."
BUT, WHERE'S JOHNNY?
AND WHERE'S YOUR SLING?*
NO QUESTIONS NOW, SUSAN. QUICKLY, WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THESE CROWDS...
* REED'S LEFT ARM WAS BROKEN IN FF #276.
"I SENSED HIM COME CLOSER, FELT SUSAN MOVE AS HE TOUCHED HER...
"THEN... THEN IT HAPPENED!"


WHAT?? WHAT HAPPENED??
I... I DON'T KNOW!
IT WAS... IT WAS AN AWFUL, BLACK, NUMBING WAVE OF ...OF SOMETHING.
AS IF THE DEEPEST, MOST FOUL PIT IN ALL OF HADES HAD SUDDENLY OPENED.
I FELT... I FELT HATRED SUDDENLY SURGING THROUGH ME. CONSUMING HATRED. OF YOU. OF SUSAN. OF EVERYBODY WHO CAN SEE.
OF THE WHOLE WORLD!
THEN... AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD COME, IT WAS GONE! I FELT COMPLETELY DRAINED. EMPTY.
I... I THINK I MUST HAVE JUST ...BLANKED OUT FOR A MOMENT THEN. AND WHEN I RECOVERED, SUSAN WAS...
GONE!
BUT THAT CAN'T BE! SUE WOULD NEVER HAVE DESERTED YOU LIKE THAT! WHEN DID ALL THIS HAPPEN, AL?
AN HOUR... PERHAPS TWO HOURS AGO. WHEN I REGAINED MY SENSES, EVERYTHING SEEMED EVEN WORSE ALL 'ROUND ME.
SO I FOUND AN OPEN STAIRWELL AND CLIMBED UP HERE, TRYING TO GET ABOVE IT ALL.
AN HOUR? THEN IT COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN REED. I WAS WITH HIM 'TIL FIFTEEN MINUTES AGO.
AND HE'D ONLY TAKEN OFF HIS SLING A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THAT.
BUT... BUT IT SOUNDED LIKE HIM... AND IT MUST HAVE LOOKED LIKE HIM FOR SUE TO HAVE RESPONDED THE WAY SHE DID.
YEAH... WELL, SHAPE-CHANGERS AIN'T EXACTLY RARE IN THIS UNIVERSE. THERE'S ONE IN ALPHA FLIGHT, I HEAR TELL THERE'S ONE HANGIN' 'ROUND WITH THE X-MEN...
AND, OF COURSE, THERE'S ALWAYS THE SKRULLS!
OH, DARLING, COULD IT BE THEM? COULD THOSE EVIL ALIENS BE THE CAUSE OF ALL THIS HORROR?

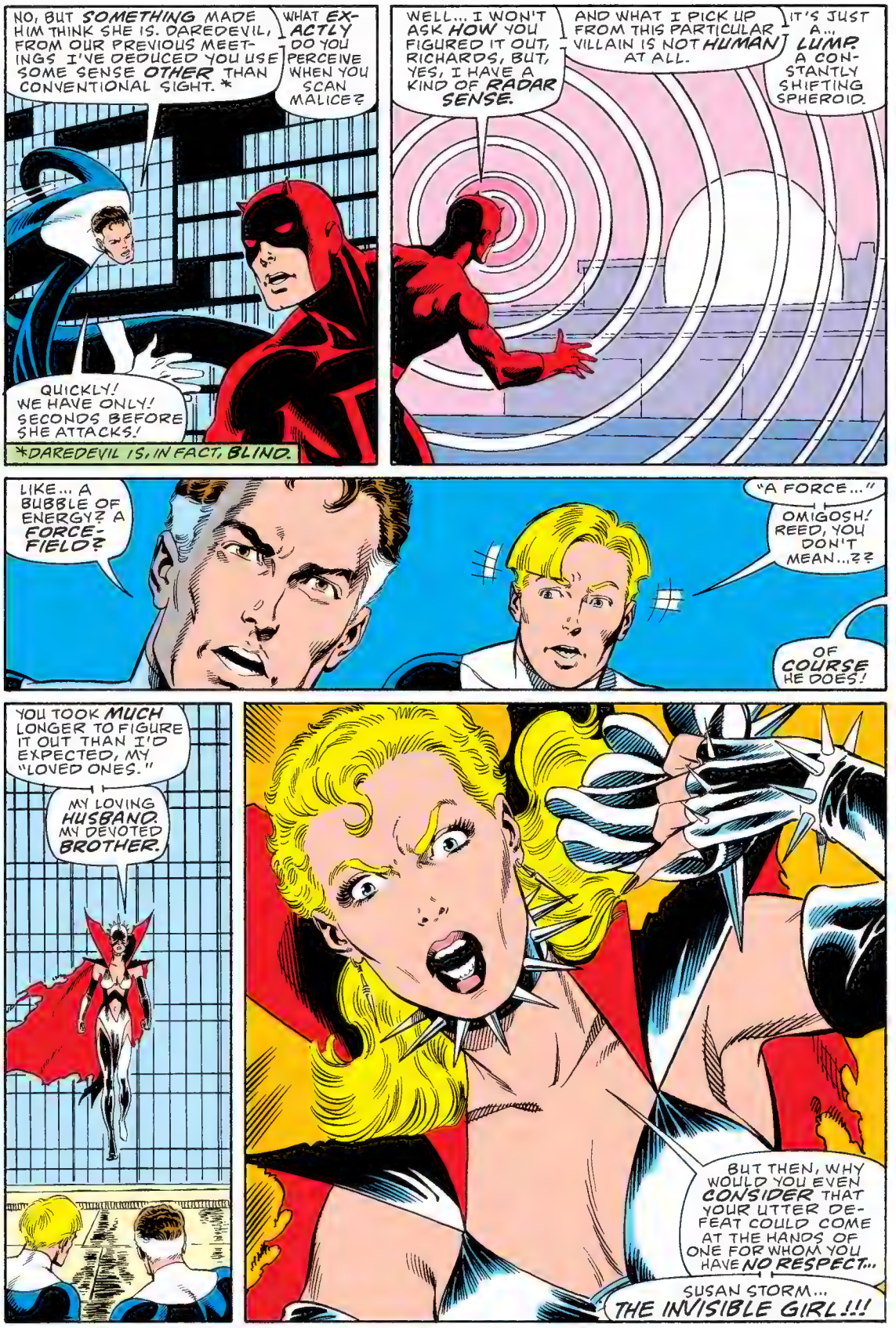

THEY'RE AS LIKELY CANDIDATES AS ANY, HONEY. REED SAID THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THE HATE PAMPHLETS WAS EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL.
WE'D BETTER HAUL IT BACK TO AVENGERS MANSION.
IF ANYONE CAN PULL AN ANSWER OUT OF THIS IT'S REED!
I HOPE--I PRAY SO! IF HE CAN'T... I FEAR IT MAY BE COMPLETELY HOPELESS!!
UHHRRR...
I... HURT TOO MUCH TO BE DEAD. SO... WHAT HAPPENED?
KARLI
THAT WALKING, TACKY LINGERIE AD... MALICE. SHE DID SOMETHING TO ME. KNOCKED ME OUT WITHOUT EVEN TOUCHING ME.
AND... I COULDN'T TOUCH HER. AS IF SHE WAS INSIDE A SUPER-STRONG GLASS BUBBLE OR...OR...
...AN INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD!
OH NO!
IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN...
COULD IT?

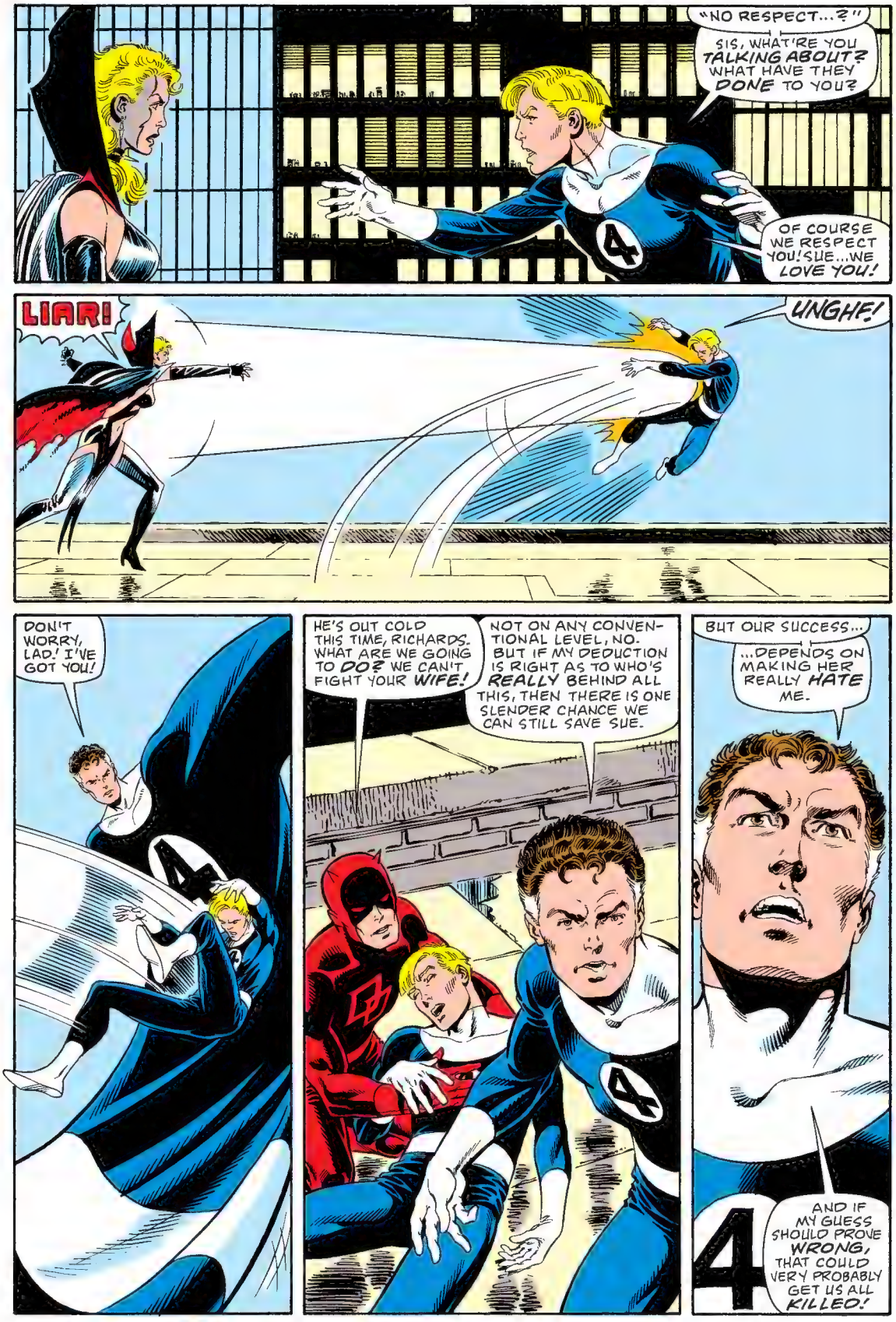
OH DEAR, OH DEAR! MASTER REED, I'VE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO CONTACT THE AVENGERS, BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO RAISE THEM.
NO DOUBT THEY HAVE PROBLEMS OF THEIR OWN, JARVIS.*
NOW, COME. I MUST SET UP THIS APPARATUS ON THE ROOF. YOU'LL HAVE TO UNLOCK THE ACCESS FOR ME.
HURRY, MAN! THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE!
*YOU MIGHT SAY THAT.' SEE AVENGERS #258.
THERE! I BELIEVE THE SUB-NEURO FREQUENCY RADIATED BY THIS DEVICE WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO COUNTERBALANCE THE EFFECTS OF THE ALIEN HYPNO-POISON IN THOSE HATE PAMPHLETS.
MY GOODNESS! I KNOW YOUR SCIENTIFIC BRILLIANCE IS NEAR LEGENDARY, SIR... BUT DO YOU REALLY MEAN SOMETHING AS SMALL AS THIS DEVICE WILL CURE EVERYONE?
NOT EVERYONE, OLD MAN.
WHO...?
A WOMAN..?
DON'T YOU MEAN "JUST A WOMAN," REED RICHARDS?
SOMEONE TO BE IGNORED AT WORST, PATRONIZED AT BEST? SOMEONE TO BE STIFLED, FRUSTRATED AT EVERY TURN?
CAPABLE OF BEARING CHILDREN, BUT NEVER RESPONSIBILITY.
CERTAINLY NOT SOMEONE CAPABLE OF DOING...
RUNCH!
...THIS!!


YOU'VE TORN RIGHT THROUGH THE REINFORCED STRUCTURE OF THE MANSION ROOF!
IMPRESSIVE--ESPECIALLY AS THERE WAS NO RELEASE OF ENERGY SUCH AS I'D EXPECT IN THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE FORCE.
BUT NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE, I THINK YOU'LL SOON DISCOVER WE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE EQUALLY ADEPT.
TO WIT, AN EXAMPLE OF WHY I CHOSE TO CALL MYSELF MISTER FANTASTIC!
FOOL!
DO YOU THINK ME UNPREPARED FOR YOUR POWER?
WHAT THE...? SOMETHING... EXPANDING... FORCING OUT AGAINST...
ARRGHH!!

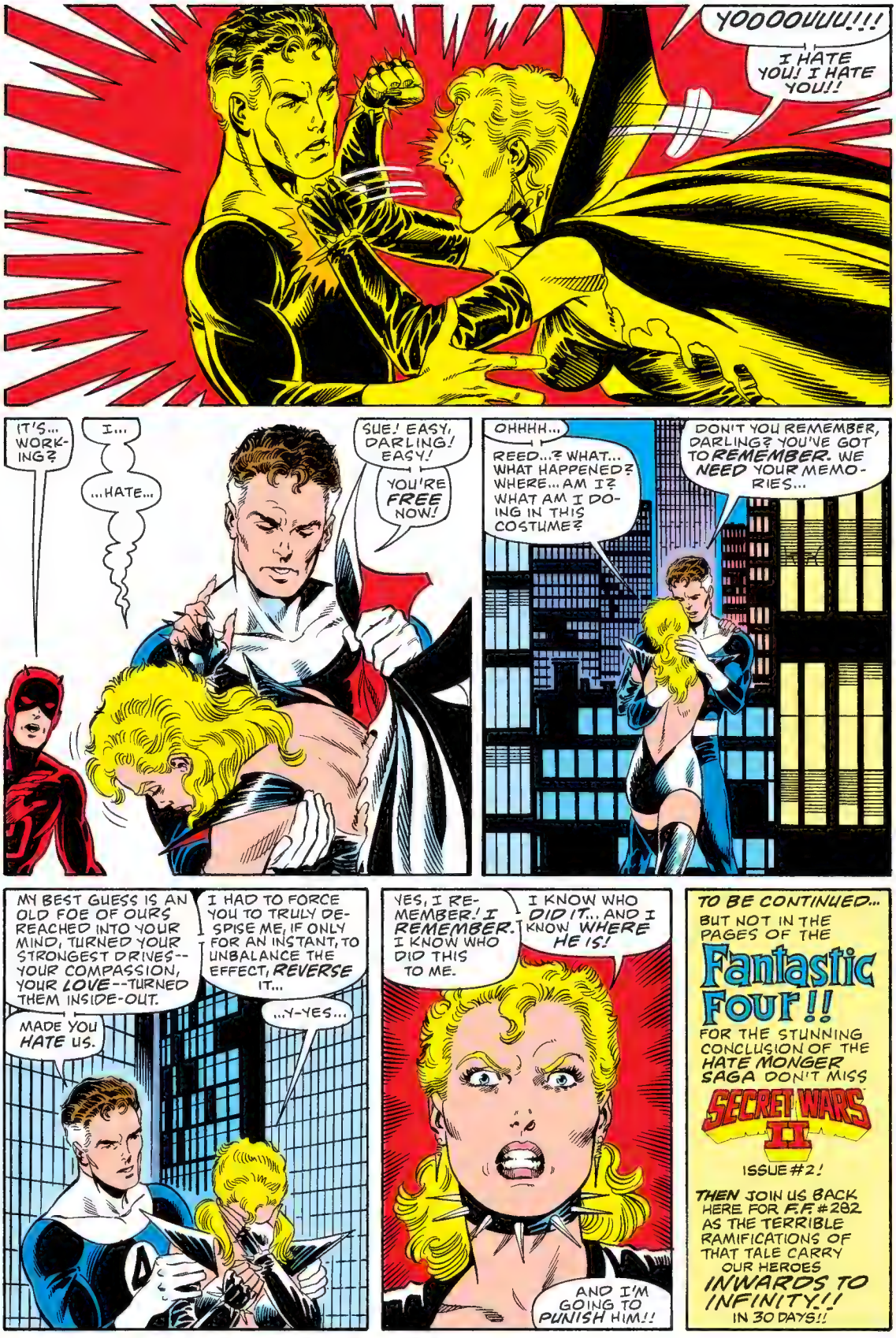

YOU SEE, FOOL? YOU SEE HOW EASY IT IS FOR MALICE TO DESTROY YOU?
ONLY... BECAUSE I HAD NOT ANTICIPATED THE FULL EXTENT OF YOUR POWERS.
BUT I HAPPEN TO BE A SCIENTIST. I ALWAYS LEARN FROM MY MISTAKES.
YOU'LL NOT TAKE ME OFF-GUARD A SECOND TIME!
WON'T I?
YOUR EGO KNOWS NO BOUNDS!
THERE WILL BE NO SECOND TIME, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? NO OPPORTUNITY TO DISGUISE YOUR BLUNDER WITH PRETTY SPEECHES.
IT'S ALL OVER! NOW YOU ARE GOING TO DIE!
AND BELIEVE ME, YOUR PATHWAY TO DEATH'S DARK DOMAIN WILL NOT BE EASY.
I INTEND TO SEE YOU SUFFER, REED RICHARDS. SUFFER AS YOU HAVE NEVER SUFFERED BEFORE!
WHATCHA GONNA DO, CUTIE? BORE HIM TO DEATH?
THE HUMAN TORCH!
HEY, TOP MARKS, KIDDO. NAME THREE OTHER SUPER HEROES AND I'LL MAKE SURE THEY HANG A GOLD STAR ON THE DOOR OF YOUR CELL!

IMPUDENT YOUNG PUP! IT'S LONG PAST TIME YOU WERE TAUGHT A LESSON!
HEY, SPARE ME BAD-GUY SHPIEL NUMBER 401, WILL YOU? I...
HUHZ
SOME-THING CUT THROUGH MY FLAME TRAIL!
HEY, WHAT GOES ON HERE?
MY FLAME! IT'S DYING! GETTING HARD TO...
...BREATHE...
...FALL-ING...
TORCH! RELAX! DON'T TENSE UP!
GOTCHA!
HHUHHRZ
DARE-DEVIL!
THE ONE AND ONLY.
NOW, WHAT'S THE STORY ON THAT AMORPHOUS GLOB YOU'RE FIGHTING?
"AMORPHOUS?" I'VE BEEN HANGIN' AROUND REED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT MEANS "SHAPE-LESS," RIGHT?
TIME TO GET YOUR EYES CHECKED, DD. SHAPELESS SHE AIN'T!


NO, BUT SOMETHING MADE HIM THINK SHE IS. DAREDEVIL, FROM OUR PREVIOUS MEETINGS I'VE DEDUCED YOU USE SOME SENSE OTHER THAN CONVENTIONAL SIGHT. *
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU PERCEIVE WHEN YOU SCAN MALICE?
QUICKLY! WE HAVE ONLY! SECONDS BEFORE SHE ATTACKS!
*DAREDEVIL IS, IN FACT, BLIND.
WELL... I WON'T ASK HOW YOU FIGURED IT OUT, RICHARDS, BUT, YES, I HAVE A KIND OF RADAR SENSE.
AND WHAT I PICK UP FROM THIS PARTICULAR VILLAIN IS NOT HUMAN AT ALL.
IT'S JUST A... LUMP. A CONSTANTLY SHIFTING SPHEROID.
LIKE... A BUBBLE OF ENERGY? A FORCE-FIELD?
"A FORCE..."
OMIGOSH! REED, YOU DON'T MEAN...??
OF COURSE HE DOES!
YOU TOOK MUCH LONGER TO FIGURE IT OUT THAN I'D EXPECTED, MY "LOVED ONES."
MY LOVING HUSBAND. MY DEVOTED BROTHER.
BUT THEN, WHY WOULD YOU EVEN CONSIDER THAT YOUR UTTER DEFEAT COULD COME AT THE HANDS OF ONE FOR WHOM YOU HAVE NO RESPECT...
SUSAN STORM... THE INVISIBLE GIRL!!!


"NO RESPECT...?"
SIS, WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?
OF COURSE WE RESPECT YOU! SUE...WE LOVE YOU!
LIAR!
UNGHF!
DON'T WORRY, LAD! I'VE GOT YOU!
HE'S OUT COLD THIS TIME, RICHARDS. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? WE CAN'T FIGHT YOUR WIFE!
NOT ON ANY CONVENTIONAL LEVEL, NO. BUT IF MY DEDUCTION IS RIGHT AS TO WHO'S REALLY BEHIND ALL THIS, THEN THERE IS ONE SLENDER CHANCE WE CAN STILL SAVE SUE.
BUT OUR SUCCESS...
...DEPENDS ON MAKING HER REALLY HATE ME.
AND IF MY GUESS SHOULD PROVE WRONG, THAT COULD VERY PROBABLY GET US ALL KILLED!

I HEAR YOU! MUTTERING, WHISPERING, PLOTTING YOUR MOVES AGAINST ME.
BUT IT IS ALL USELESS!! YOU CANNOT STAND AGAINST ME.
I SEE THAT NOW. I SEE EVERY-THING SO CLEARLY NOW!
SUSAN, BE QUIET! DAREDEVIL AND I ARE IN NO MOOD TO LISTEN TO YOUR DRIVEL ANY LONGER!
YOUR COWARDLY ATTACK HAS TEMPORARILY IN-CAPACITATED JOHNNY, AND WE MUST TEND TO HIM.
SO JUST SHUT UP NOW.
WH-HAT?!?
YOU...YOU DARE SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT??
SUSAN! I TOLD YOU TO BE QUIET!
WE INDULGED YOUR FOOLISH, FEMALE OUTBURSTS, BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR SUCH GAMES.
MONSTER!!
I'LL SMASH YOU!!
OH, WILL YOU, SUSAN?
DO YOU TRULY BE-LIEVE YOUR PATHETIC FORCE-FIELDS ARE OF ANY USE AGAINST THE FANTASTIC FOUR?
PLEASE, DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH IN YOUR FACE, SUSAN. YOU'D HAVE BEEN KILLED OUTRIGHT, YEARS AGO...
...BUT FOR THE REST OF US CARRY-ING YOU.
WHY... YOU...
SUSAN, I SAID SHUT UP!


YOOOOUUU!!!
I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!!
IT'S... WORKING?
I...
...HATE...
SUE! EASY, DARLING! EASY!
YOU'RE FREE NOW!
OHHHH...
REED...? WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE... AM I? WHAT AM I DOING IN THIS COSTUME?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER, DARLING? YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER. WE NEED YOUR MEMORIES...
MY BEST GUESS IS AN OLD FOE OF OURS REACHED INTO YOUR MIND, TURNED YOUR STRONGEST DRIVES--YOUR COMPASSION, YOUR LOVE--TURNED THEM INSIDE-OUT.
MADE YOU HATE US.
I HAD TO FORCE YOU TO TRULY DESPISE ME, IF ONLY FOR AN INSTANT, TO UNBALANCE THE EFFECT, REVERSE IT...
...Y-YES...
YES, I REMEMBER! I REMEMBER. I KNOW WHO DID THIS TO ME.
I KNOW WHO DID IT... AND I KNOW WHERE HE IS!
AND I'M GOING TO PUNISH HIM!!
TO BE CONTINUED...
BUT NOT IN THE PAGES OF THE
Fantastic Four!!
FOR THE STUNNING CONCLUSION OF THE HATE MONGER SAGA DON'T MISS
SECRET WARS II
ISSUE #2!
THEN JOIN US BACK HERE FOR F.F. #282 AS THE TERRIBLE RAMIFICATIONS OF THAT TALE CARRY OUR HEROES
INWARDS TO INFINITY!!
IN 30 DAYS!!

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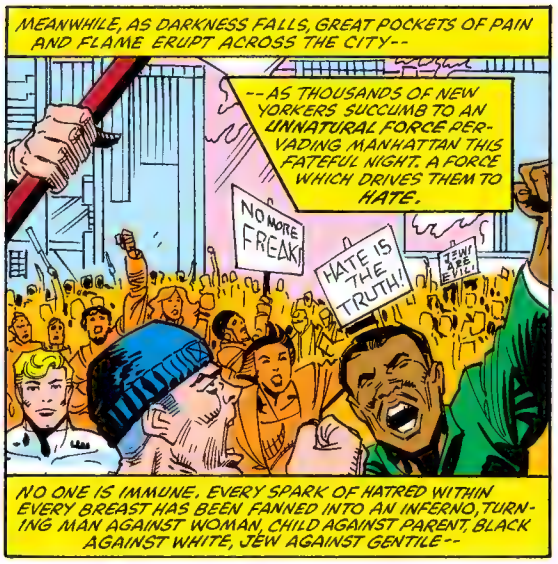
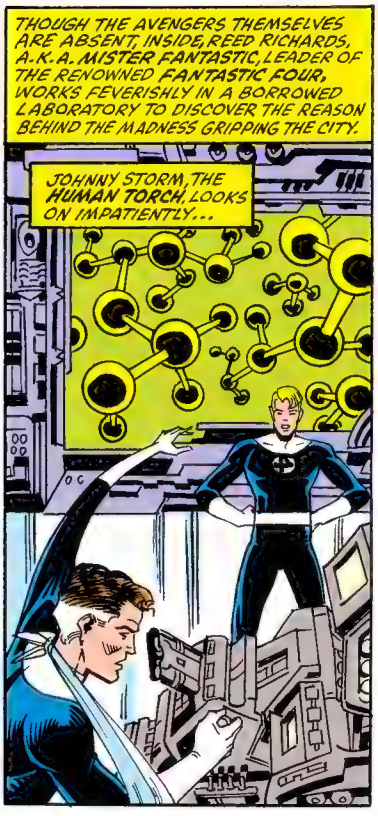
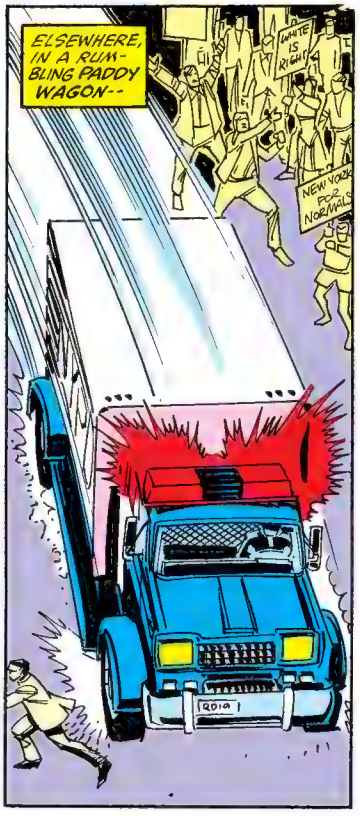
2 IN A NINE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
SECRET WARS II
MILGROM
QUOTH THE BEYONDER:
"I'LL TAKE MANHATTAN!"

From *Secret Wars II* #2 (August 1985)


MEANWHILE, AS DARKNESS FALLS, GREAT POCKETS OF PAIN AND FLAME ERUPT ACROSS THE CITY--
--AS THOUSANDS OF NEW YORKERS SUCCUMB TO AN UNNATURAL FORCE PERVADING MANHATTAN THIS FATEFUL NIGHT. A FORCE WHICH DRIVES THEM TO HATE.
NO MORE FREAKS
HATE IS THE TRUTH!
JEWS ARE EVIL
NO ONE IS IMMUNE. EVERY SPARK OF HATRED WITHIN EVERY BREAST HAS BEEN FANNED INTO AN INFERNO, TURNING MAN AGAINST WOMAN, CHILD AGAINST PARENT, BLACK AGAINST WHITE, JEW AGAINST GENTILE--

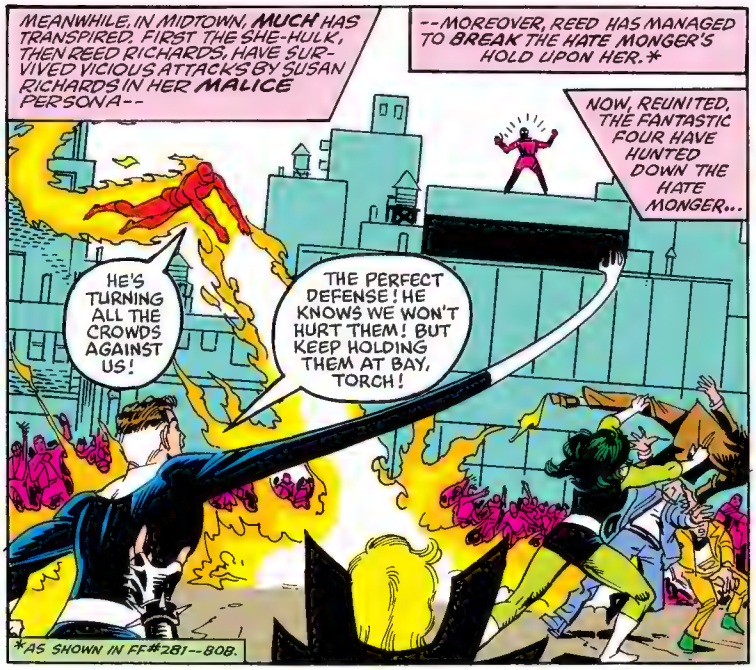
--HUMAN AGAINST SUPER-HUMAN.
AMERICA FOR AMERICANS
FREAKS GO HOME
MUTIE MOST DIE!
NO DIFFERENCE GOES UNNOTICED, OR UNHATED. A MOB PICKETS AVENGERS MANSION, HOME BASE OF THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST HEROES.

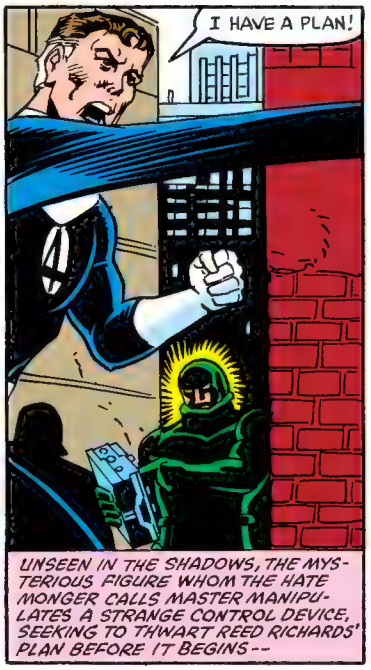

THOUGH THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES ARE ABSENT, INSIDE, REED RICHARDS, A.K.A. MISTER FANTASTIC, LEADER OF THE RENOWNED FANTASTIC FOUR, WORKS FEVERISHLY IN A BORROWED LABORATORY TO DISCOVER THE REASON BEHIND THE MADNESS GRIPPING THE CITY.
JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH, LOOKS ON IMPATIENTLY...



--A THIRD MEMBER OF THE FOUR, THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK, AND HER BOYFRIEND WYATT WINGFOOT, WHO WERE ARRESTED UNJUSTLY A SHORT TIME AGO, RIDE TOWARD A FATE FAR DIFFERENT--AND WORSE--THAN THEY IMAGINE.
TELL ME AGAIN, WYATT... TELL ME WHY I SHOULDN'T...
BECAUSE IT'D ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE, JEN. RIPPING THIS TRUCK APART--NOT TO MENTION THE OFFICERS WHO ARRESTED US--WOULD ONLY JUSTIFY THIS OUTRAGE!
IT MIGHT BE WORTH IT...

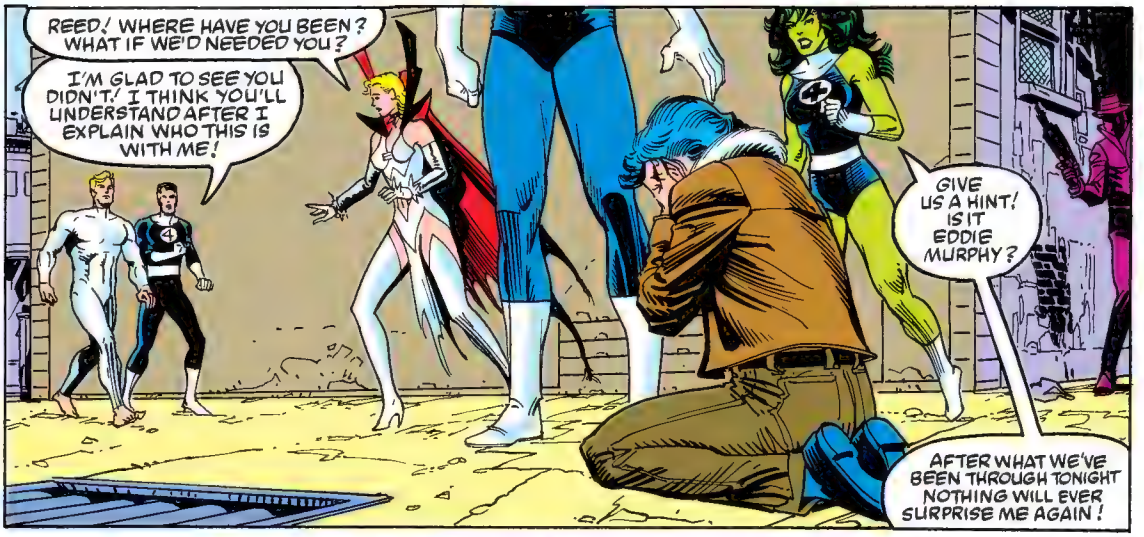
NOT FAR AWAY, ON MADISON AVENUE, THE FOURTH MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, SUSAN RICHARDS, THE INVISIBLE GIRL, ESCORTS ALICIA MASTERS HOME--
--AVOIDING THE DANGEROUS MOBS BY RENDERING HERSELF AND HER CHARGE INVISIBLE...
NOT EVEN INVISIBILITY, HOWEVER, CAN PREVENT THEIR DETECTION BY THE AUTHORS OF THE RAMPANT HATRED...
THERE SHE IS, AS I PREDICTED!
BEAUTIFUL, MASTER! YOUR PLAN IS WORKING!
IT IS TIME TO INITIATE PHASE FOUR! BEGIN YOUR METAMORPHOSIS!
YES, MASTER! IT TAKES NO MORE THAN THE BLINKING OF AN EYE FOR ME TO DROP THE SHAPE I CURRENTLY WEAR...
...IN FAVOR OF ONE THE INVISIBLE GIRL WILL FIND MORE TRUSTWORTHY!
EXCELLENT! NOW, GO AFTER HER--AND DO NOT FAIL ME!
FOR MORE OF THE STORY, SEE FF'S #280 AND 281 --BOB.
SECONDS LATER...
SUE, DARLING, WAIT--! I NEED YOUR HELP!
WHAT IS IT, REED? WHAT'S WRONG?!
YOUR CLOTHES--! THAT ISN'T WHAT YOU WERE WEARING! HOW DID--?!
THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT! WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT I JUST GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO TOUCH YOU--
--SO I CAN IMBUE MY HATE-STIMULUS INTO YOU DIRECTLY... FULL FORCE!
OHH!
YOU'RE NOT REED RICHARDS! WHO ARE YOU?!
THE IMPOSTOR'S ANSWER IS A BACKHAND BLOW WHICH SENDS THE BLIND WOMAN SPRAWLING TO THE PAVEMENT--
--AND, MOMENTS LATER...
THIS CLOTHING YOU GAVE ME FEELS SO RIGHT! IT REVEALS THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE HATRED I FEEL INSIDE!
AND WHO DO YOU HATE MOST?
REED RICHARDS!
YOUR HUSBAND?
NO! I AM NO LONGER SUSAN RICHARDS--! NO LONGER "THE INVISIBLE GIRL!" NEVER AGAIN! NOW I AM MALICE--! THE MISTRESS OF HATE!
AND NOW, YOU BELONG, BODY AND SOUL TO ME... THE HATE-MONGER!

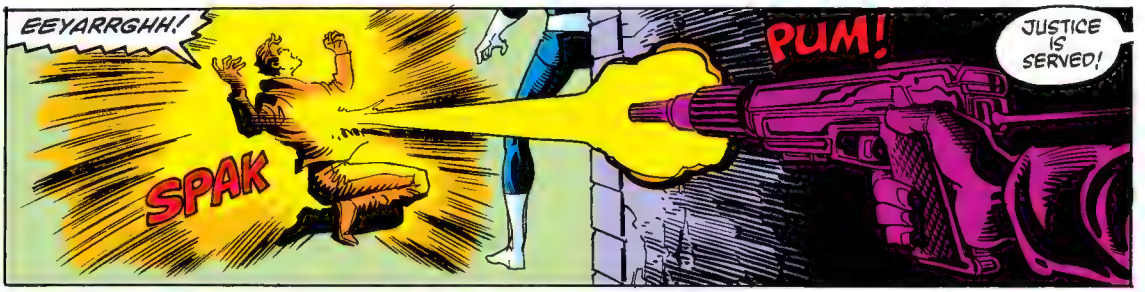

MEANWHILE, IN MIDTOWN, MUCH HAS TRANSPIRED. FIRST THE SHE-HULK, THEN REED RICHARDS, HAVE SURVIVED VICIOUS ATTACKS BY SUSAN RICHARDS IN HER MALICE PERSONA--
--MOREOVER, REED HAS MANAGED TO BREAK THE HATE MONGER'S HOLD UPON HER.*
NOW, REUNITED, THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE HUNTED DOWN THE HATE MONGER...
HE'S TURNING ALL THE CROWDS AGAINST US!
THE PERFECT DEFENSE! HE KNOWS WE WON'T HURT THEM! BUT KEEP HOLDING THEM AT BAY, TORCH!
*AS SHOWN IN FF#281--808.


I HAVE A PLAN!
UNSEEN IN THE SHADOWS, THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE WHOM THE HATE MONGER CALLS MASTER MANIPULATES A STRANGE CONTROL DEVICE, SEEKING TO THWART REED RICHARDS' PLAN BEFORE IT BEGINS--

BUT, SUDDENLY, AN UNANTICIPATED FACTOR ABRUPTLY ARRIVES UPON THE SCENE...
IS HALLUCINATING WHY THERE IS EATING?
WHAT ON EARTH?!
AT THAT INSTANT, ABOVE...
Y-YEOW! WH-WHAT'S THE M-MATTER WITH ME? I'M SHAKING LIKE A LEAF! I--I'VE NEVER BEEN SO SCARED--!
MY FIREBALL--! I LOST CONTROL! IT'S GOING WILD!
REED! LOOK OUT!
DON'T WORRY, JOHNNY, I'LL COVER HIM WITH AN INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD!
AND WHOEVER THAT IS WITH HIM! WHAT'S HE DOING WALKING INTO THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE? IS HE CRAZY? HE ALMOST GOT REED KILLED, DISTRACTING HIM LIKE THAT--!
THANKS, SUE!
WHAT HAPPENED, JOHNNY? IT ISN'T LIKE YOU TO PANIC!
IT WAS WEIRD--! IT JUST CAME OVER ME LIKE SOMEBODY FLIPPED A SWITCH INSIDE MY HEAD!
I'LL BET IT WAS MORE OF THAT HATE-SLEAZEBALL'S WORK! IF HE CAN MANIPULATE HATE, MAYBE HE CAN DO FEAR, TOO!
RATS! HE'S GONE!
AFTER HIM!
COME ON, REED! HE'LL GET AWAY!
I--I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, SUE!
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM FROM BEYOND!
THE BEYONDER! I SUSPECTED AS MUCH! CAPTAIN AMERICA WARNED ME YOU'D APPEARED ON EARTH!

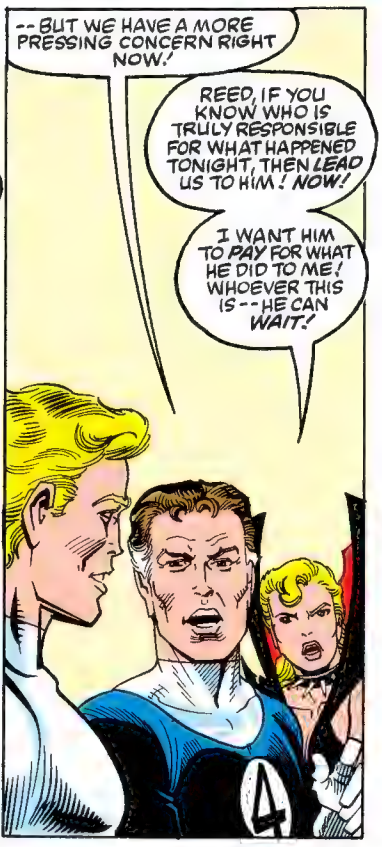
NEARBY...
MASTER! THEY'RE CLOSE BEHIND--! AND THERE ARE NO CROWDS NEARBY TO TURN AGAINST THEM!
PLEASE--! USE YOUR DEVICE! TWIST THEIR EMOTIONS! ONLY YOU CAN STOP THEM!
I COULD ...BUT I SHALL NOT!
MASTER, PLEASE SAVE ME! I BEG YOU! I'VE SERVED YOU WELL!
NOT WELL ENOUGH!
GOT YOU, YOU HATEFUL LITTLE SLIME!
NO-O-O!
LOOK! THE RAT HAS A BUDDY WHO'S CUTTING OUT ON HIM!
YOU CAN'T GO ANY-WHERE YET, PAL! I HAVEN'T PUNCHED YOUR TICKET!
WHAT?!
WHOEVER IT WAS JUST-- JUST BLIPPED OUT! RIGHT THROUGH MY FINGERS!
AT LEAST WE CAUGHT THIS SCUM-- WHO TWISTED MY MIND AGAINST REED AND EVERYTHING I CHERISH!
DON'T HURT ME!

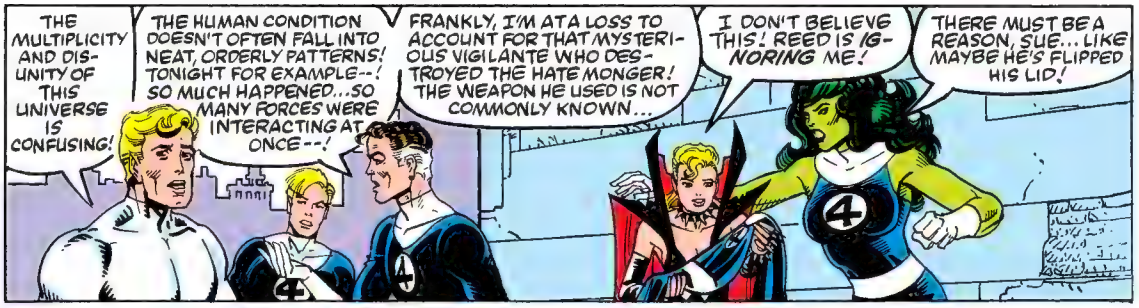

REED! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHAT IF WE'D NEEDED YOU?
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU DIDN'T! I THINK YOU'LL UNDERSTAND AFTER I EXPLAIN WHO THIS IS WITH ME!
GIVE US A HINT! IS IT EDDIE MURPHY?
AFTER WHAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH TONIGHT NOTHING WILL EVER SURPRISE ME AGAIN!


EEYARRGHH!
SPAK
PUM!
JUSTICE IS SERVED!

I--I TAKE IT BACK!

IT WAS SOME CRAZY VIGILANTE WITH A--A WEIRD RAYGUN! HE SPLIT WHILE WE WERE STANDING HERE GAPING! COME ON! MAYBE WE CAN STILL CATCH HIM!
NO, SHE-HULK! STAY HERE!
BUT... THAT MURDERER--!
THERE WAS NO MURDER! I'M VERY CERTAIN THAT THE HATE MONGER WAS MERELY A HUMANOID CONSTRUCT AND NOT ACTUALLY ALIVE! I ALSO HAVE A HUNCH ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THE MASTERMIND BEHIND HIM--


--BUT WE HAVE A MORE PRESSING CONCERN RIGHT NOW!
REED, IF YOU KNOW WHO IS TRULY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT, THEN LEAD US TO HIM! NOW!
I WANT HIM TO PAY FOR WHAT HE DID TO ME! WHOEVER THIS IS--HE CAN WAIT!


THE MULTIPLICITY AND DISUNITY OF THIS UNIVERSE IS CONFUSING!
THE HUMAN CONDITION DOESN'T OFTEN FALL INTO NEAT, ORDERLY PATTERNS! TONIGHT FOR EXAMPLE--! SO MUCH HAPPENED...SO MANY FORCES WERE INTERACTING AT ONCE--!
FRANKLY, I'M AT A LOSS TO ACCOUNT FOR THAT MYSTERIOUS VIGILANTE WHO DESTROYED THE HATE MONGER! THE WEAPON HE USED IS NOT COMMONLY KNOWN...
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! REED IS IGNORING ME!
THERE MUST BE A REASON, SUE... LIKE MAYBE HE'S FLIPPED HIS LID!

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN FULLY EXPLAIN THE INTRICACIES OF OUR UNIVERSE TO YOU...
I SHALL SEEK ELSEWHERE!
WAIT! DON'T...!
...GO...

HE'S GONE! GONE!
BLAST IT! I HAD A CHANCE TO REACH HIM... COMMUNICATE..
REED, I DON'T KNOW WHAT ALL THIS IS ABOUT, BUT I NEED YOU! I NEED YOU NOW! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

I--I... OF COURSE, DARLING! BUT...
THAT WAS THE BEYONDER! HE... HIS POWER IS UNIMAGINABLE! GODLIKE! A CHANCE TO COMMUNICATE WITH SUCH A BEING...! IT...IT'S IMPORTANT THAT...
NOT NOW, REED! I NEED YOU NOW! AM I IMPORTANT?

MARVEL
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
SECRET WARS II
CONTINUES IN THIS ISSUE!
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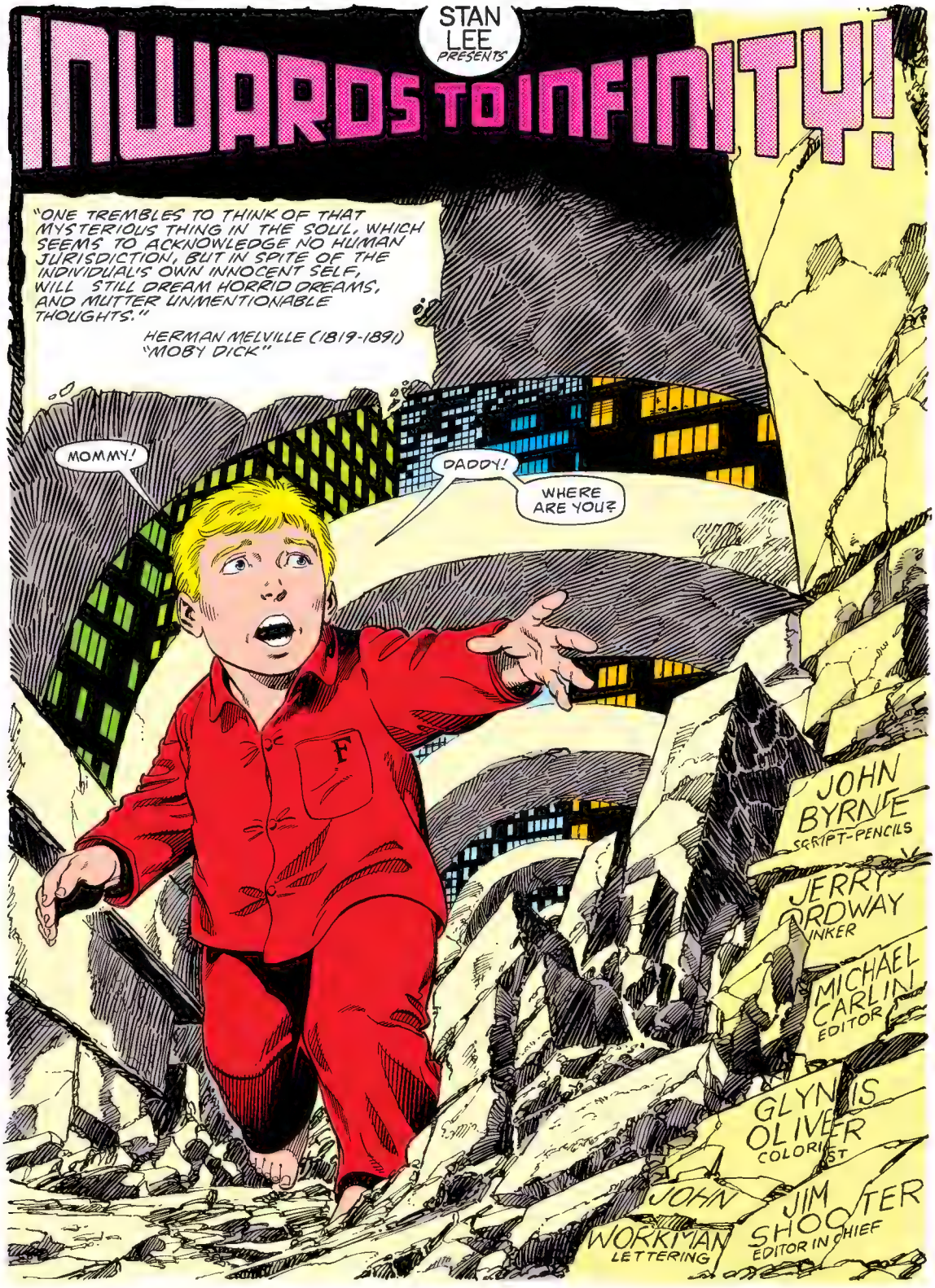
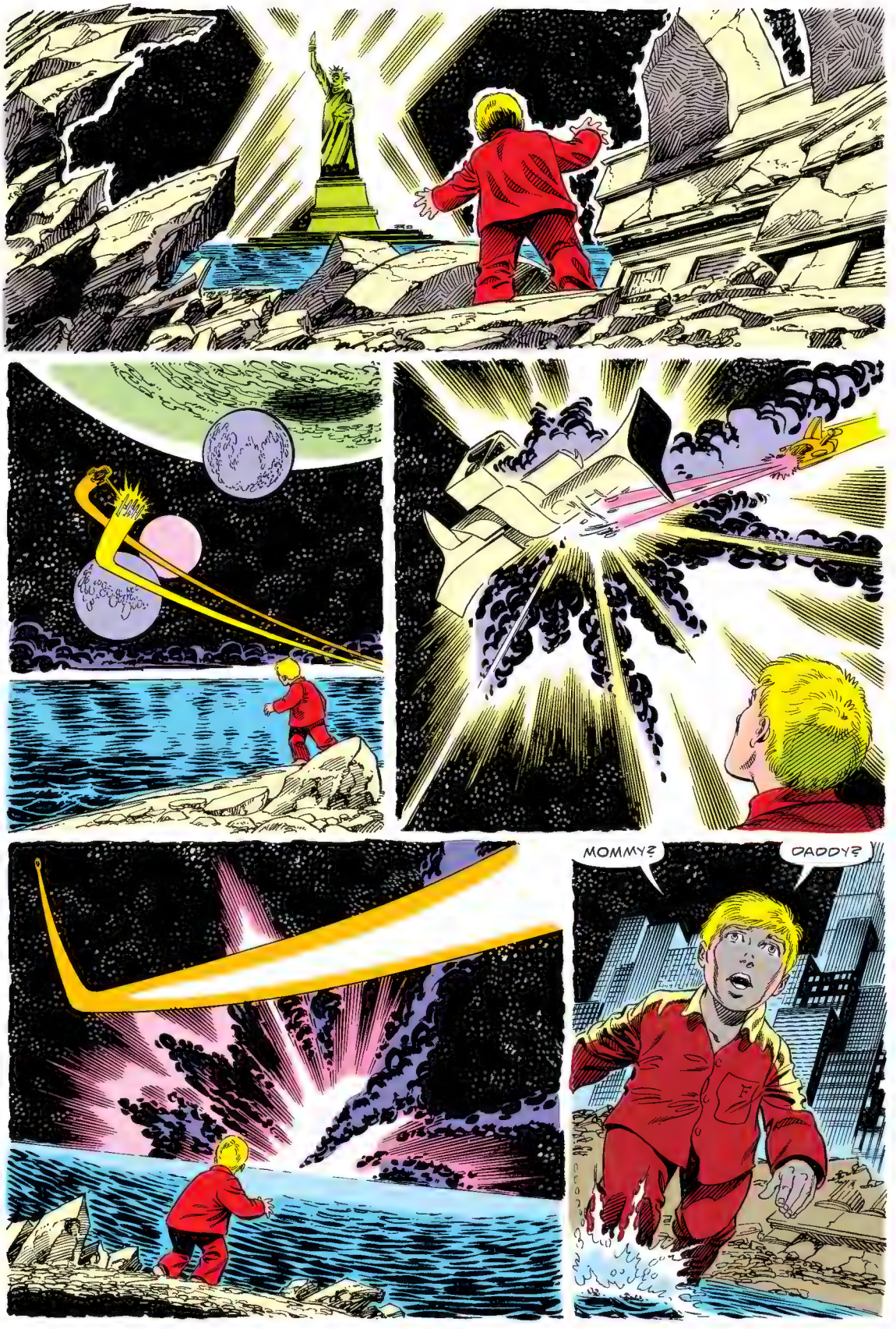
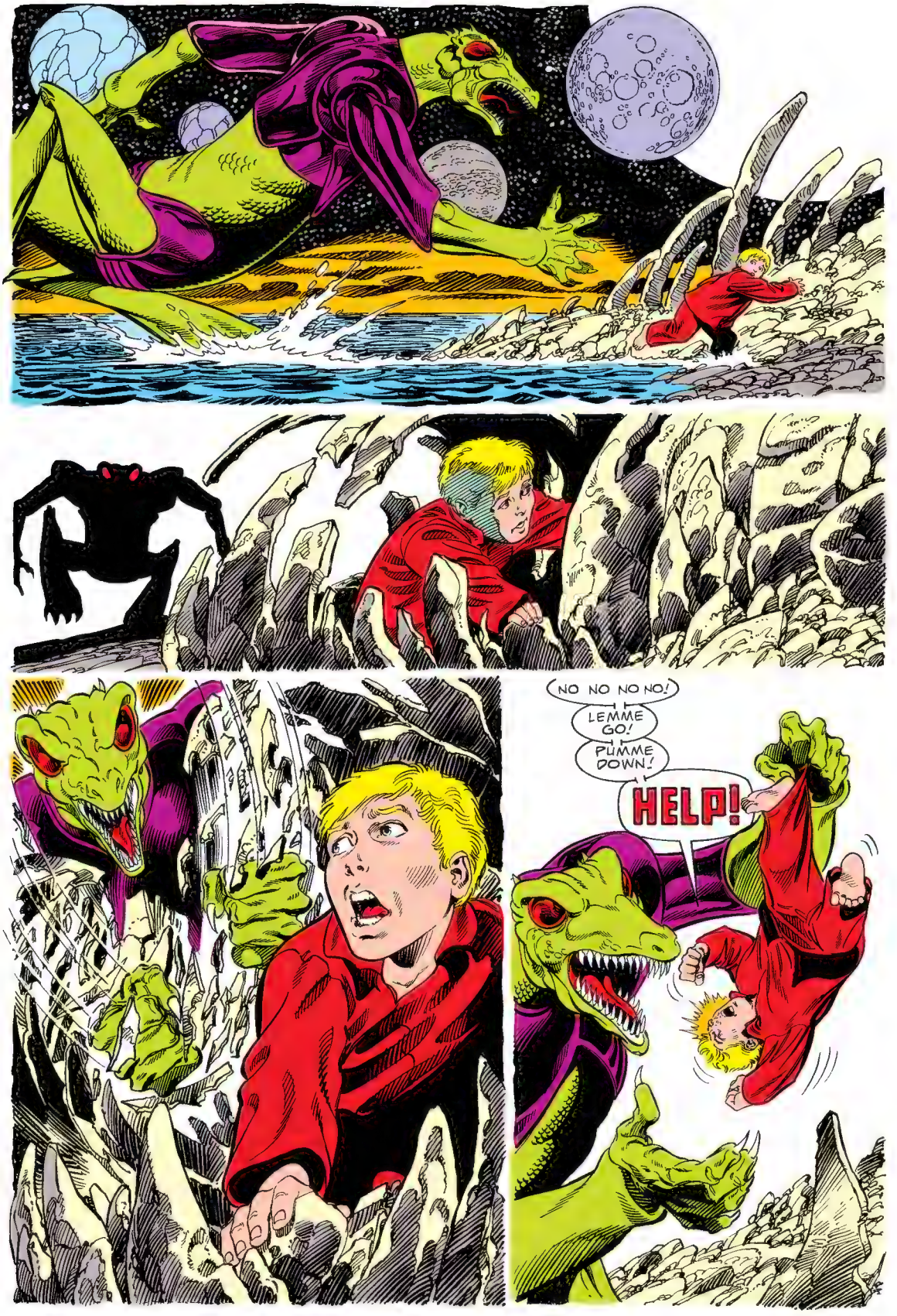
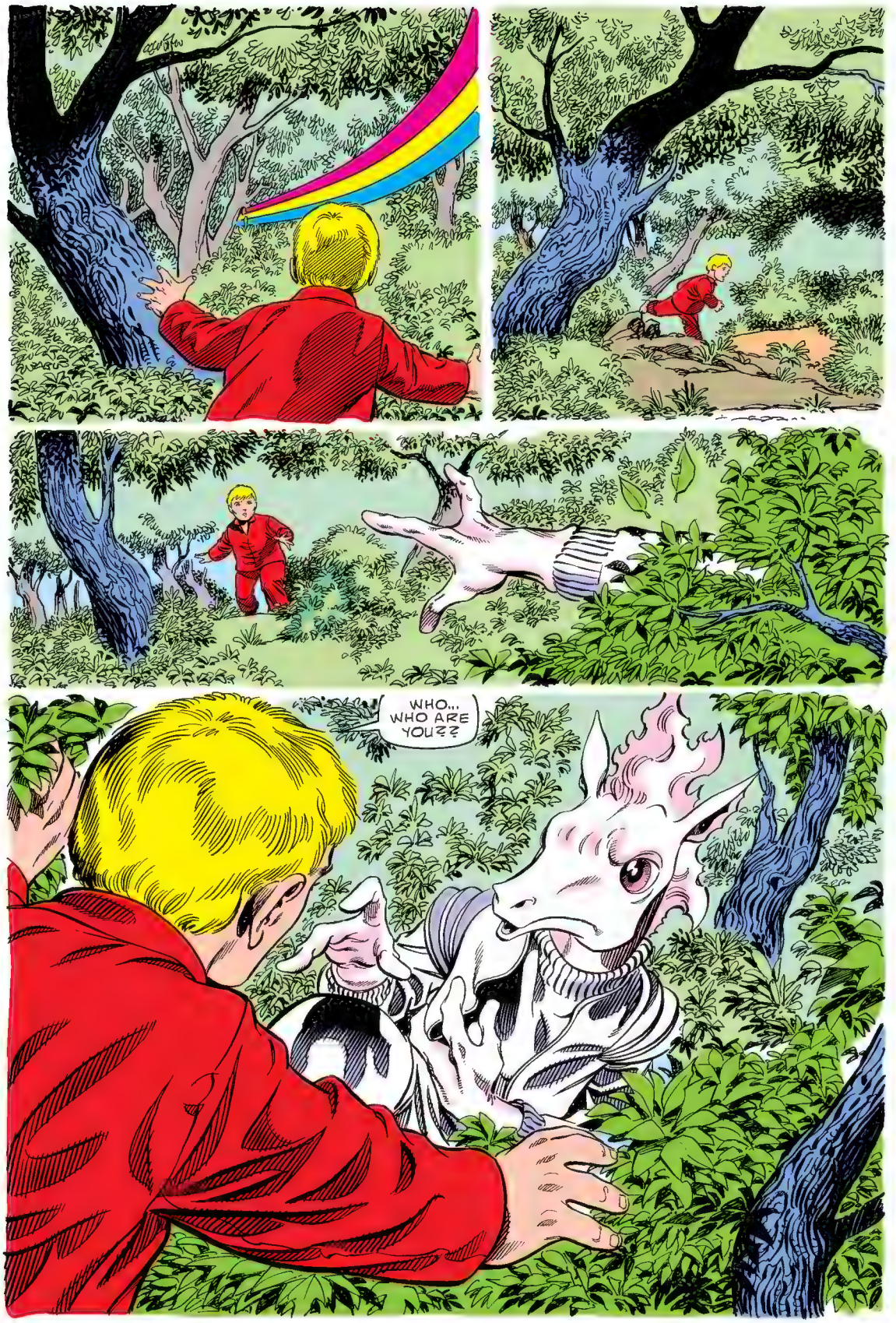
INWARDS TO INFINITY!

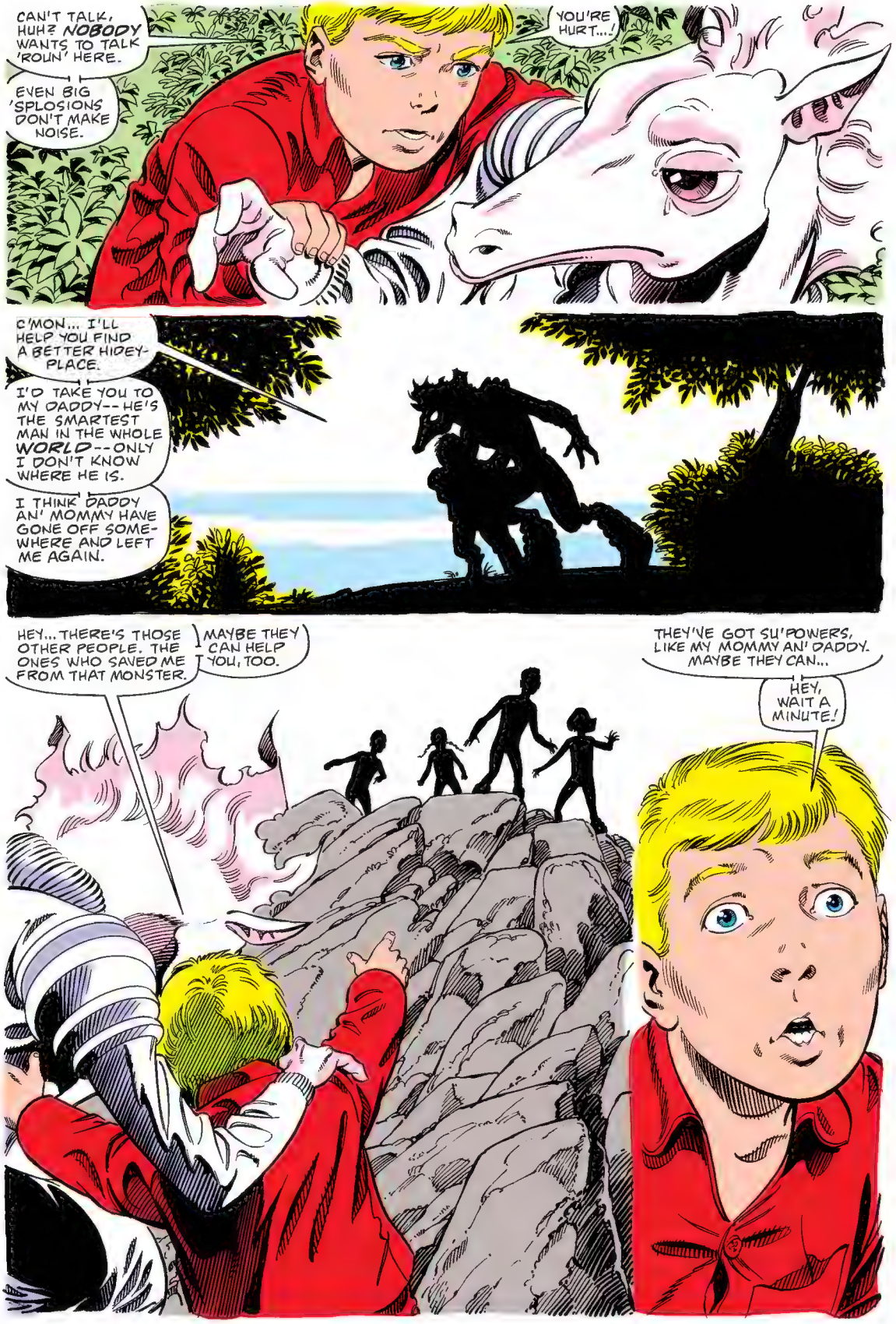

STAN LEE PRESENTS
INWARDS TO INFINITY!
"ONE TREMBLES TO THINK OF THAT MYSTERIOUS THING IN THE SOUL, WHICH SEEMS TO ACKNOWLEDGE NO HUMAN JURISDICTION, BUT IN SPITE OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S OWN INNOCENT SELF, WILL STILL DREAM HORRID DREAMS, AND MUTTER UNMENTIONABLE THOUGHTS."
HERMAN MELVILLE (1819-1891)
"MOBY DICK"
MOMMY!
DADDY!
WHERE ARE YOU?
JOHN BYRNE
SCRIPT-PENCILS
JERRY ORDWAY
INKER
MICHAEL CARLIN
EDITOR
GLYNIS OLIVER
COLORIST
JOHN WORKMAN
LETTERING
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

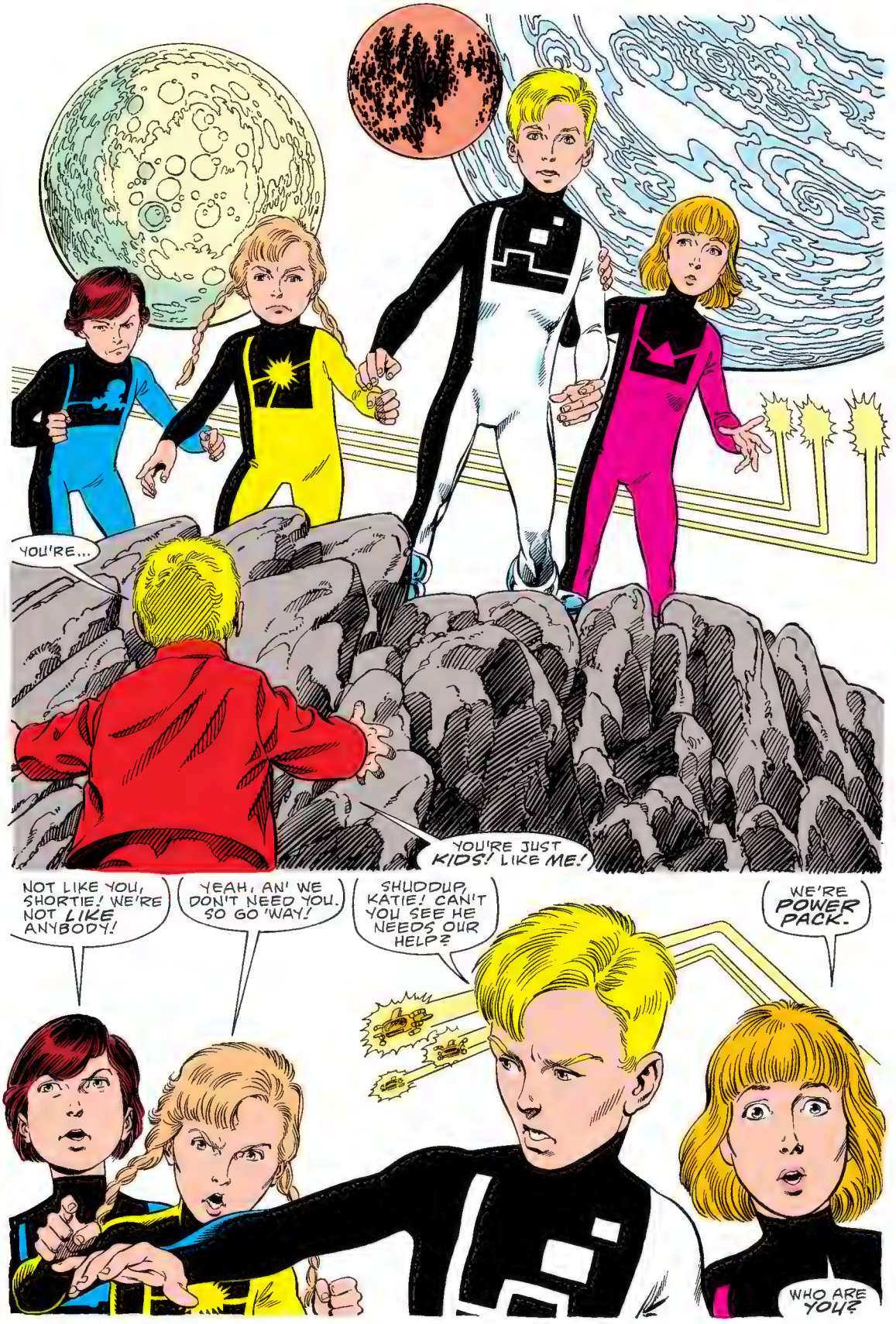

MOMMY?
DADDY?

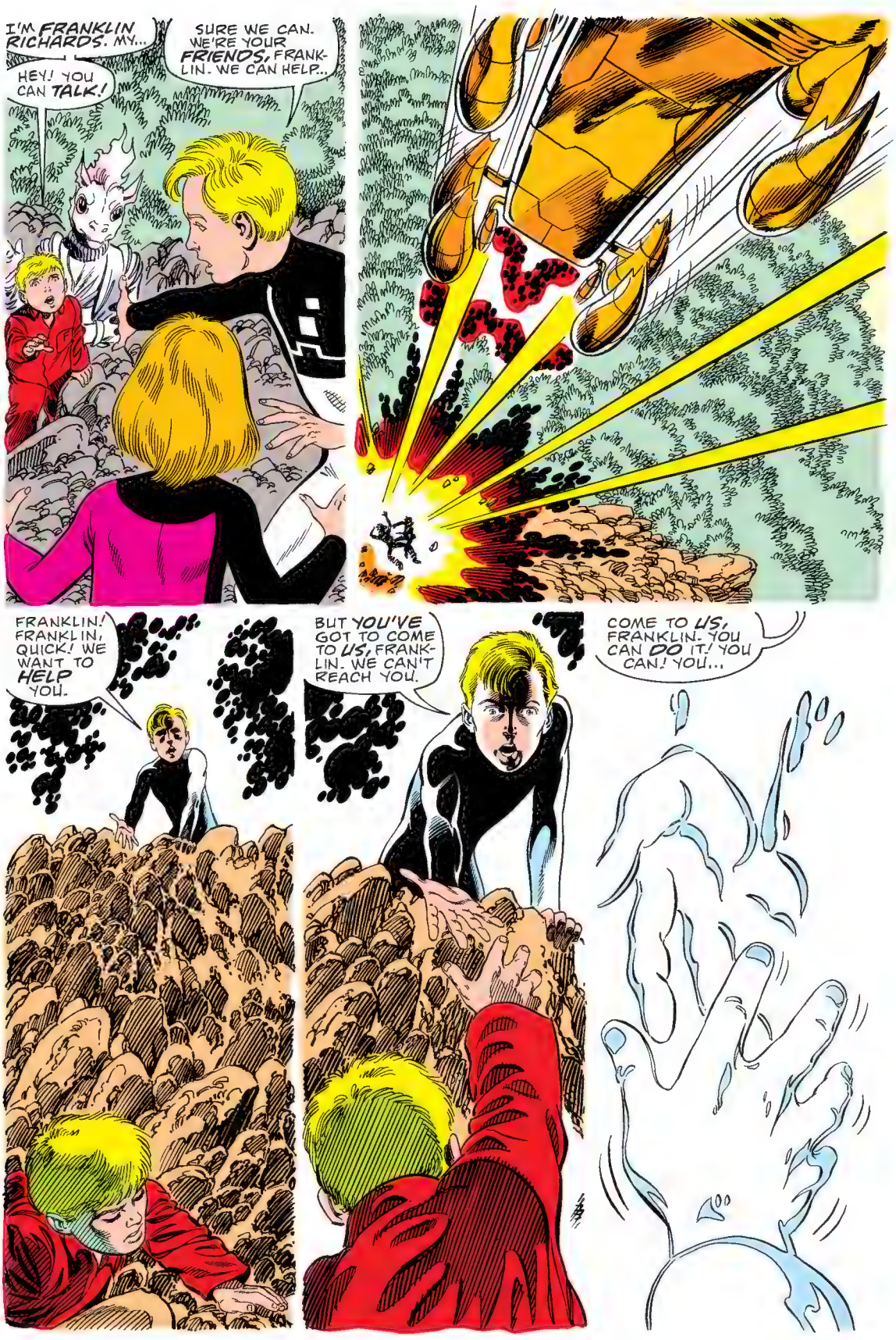
M-MOMMY?
NO!
NO!

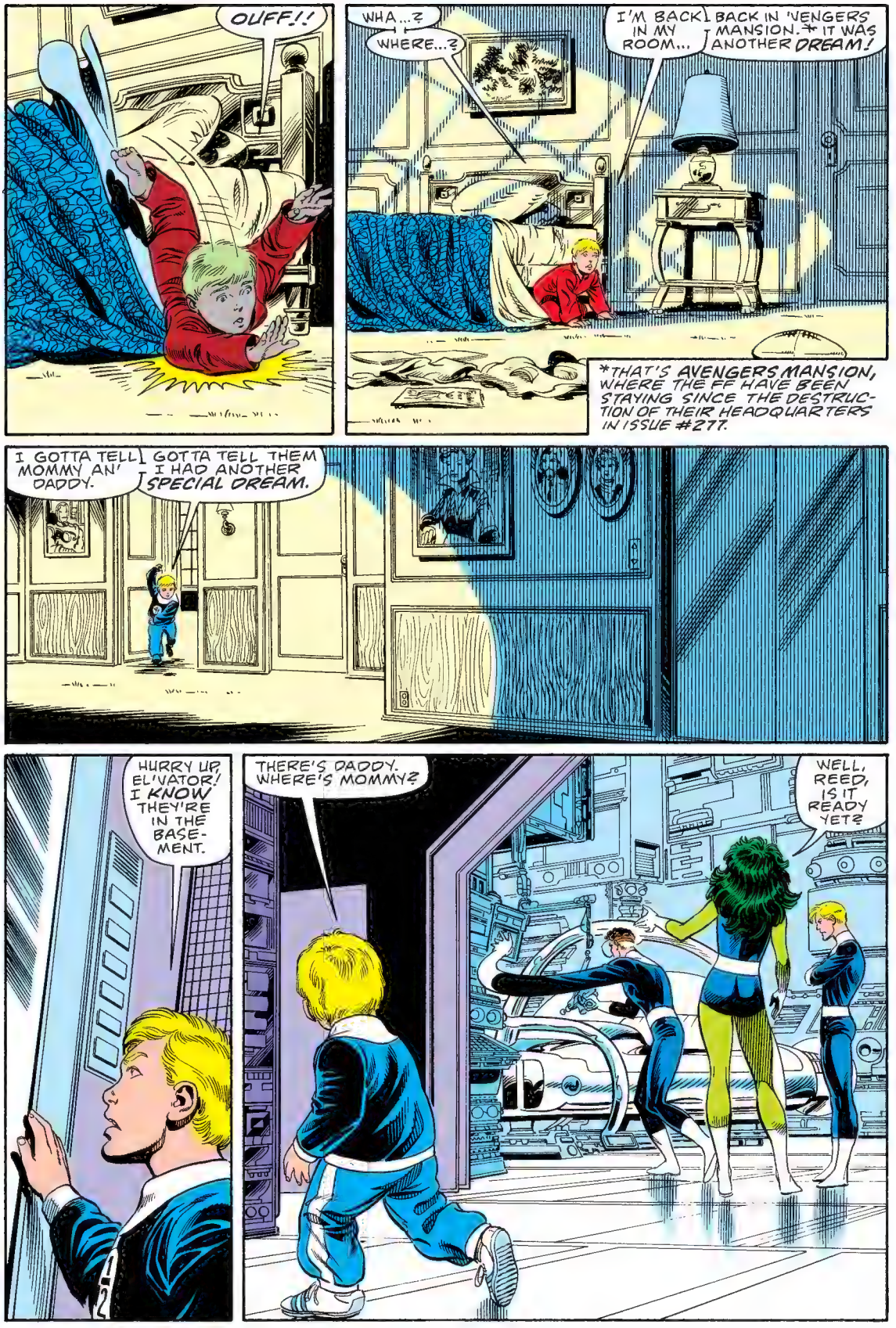

NO NO NO NO!
LEMME GO!
PLUMME DOWN!
HELP!


WHO... WHO ARE YOU??


CAN'T TALK, HUH? NOBODY WANTS TO TALK 'ROUN' HERE.
EVEN BIG 'SPLOSIONS DON'T MAKE NOISE.
YOU'RE HURT...!
C'MON... I'LL HELP YOU FIND A BETTER HIDEY-PLACE.
I'D TAKE YOU TO MY DADDY--HE'S THE SMARTEST MAN IN THE WHOLE WORLD--ONLY I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.
I THINK DADDY AN' MOMMY HAVE GONE OFF SOMEWHERE AND LEFT ME AGAIN.
HEY... THERE'S THOSE OTHER PEOPLE. THE ONES WHO SAVED ME FROM THAT MONSTER.
MAYBE THEY CAN HELP YOU, TOO.
THEY'VE GOT SU'POWERS, LIKE MY MOMMY AN' DADDY. MAYBE THEY CAN...
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!

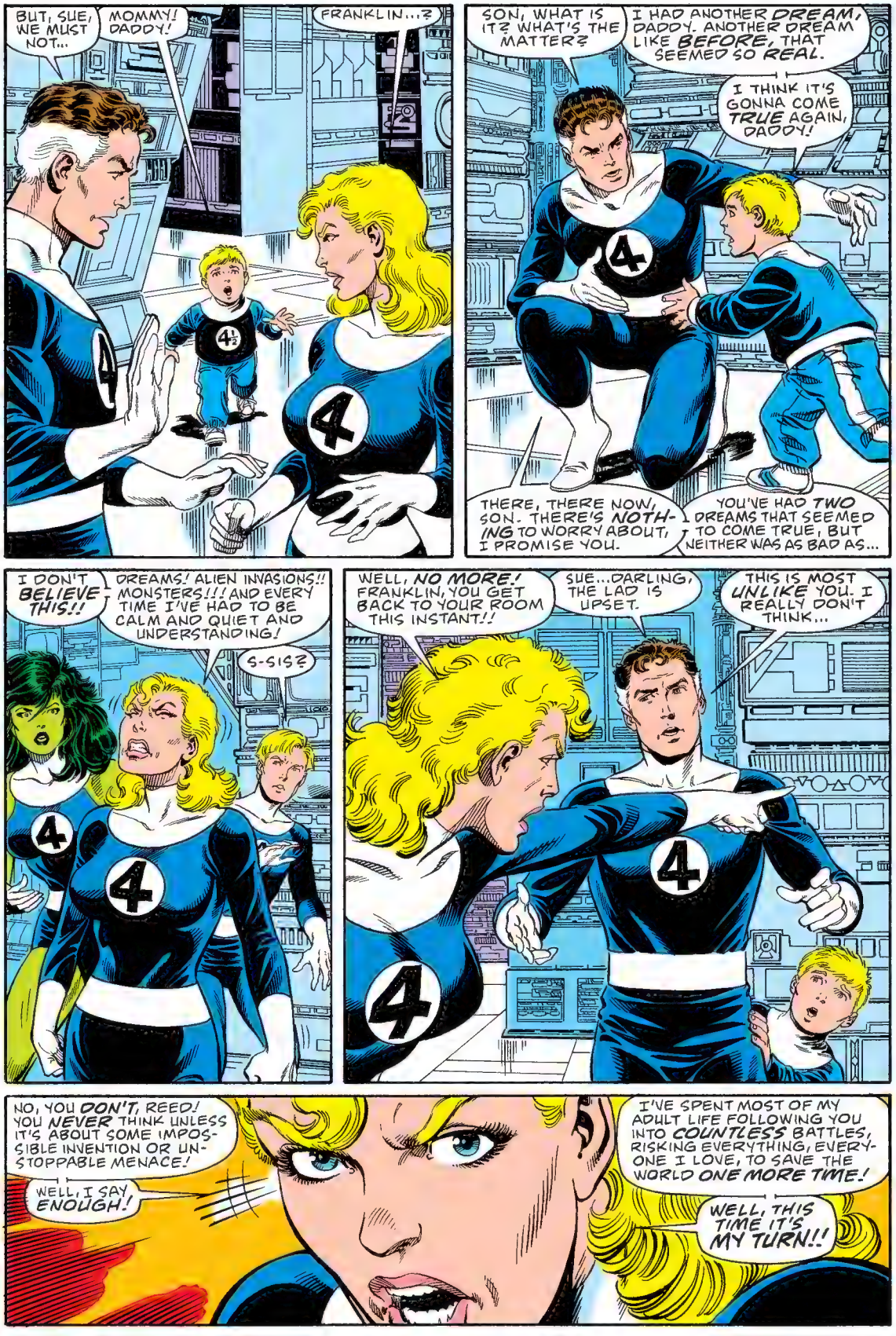

YOU'RE...
YOU'RE JUST KIDS! LIKE ME!
NOT LIKE YOU, SHORTIE! WE'RE NOT LIKE ANYBODY!
YEAH, AN' WE DON'T NEED YOU. SO GO 'WAY!
SHUDDUP, KATIE! CAN'T YOU SEE HE NEEDS OUR HELP?
WE'RE POWER PACK.
WHO ARE YOU?

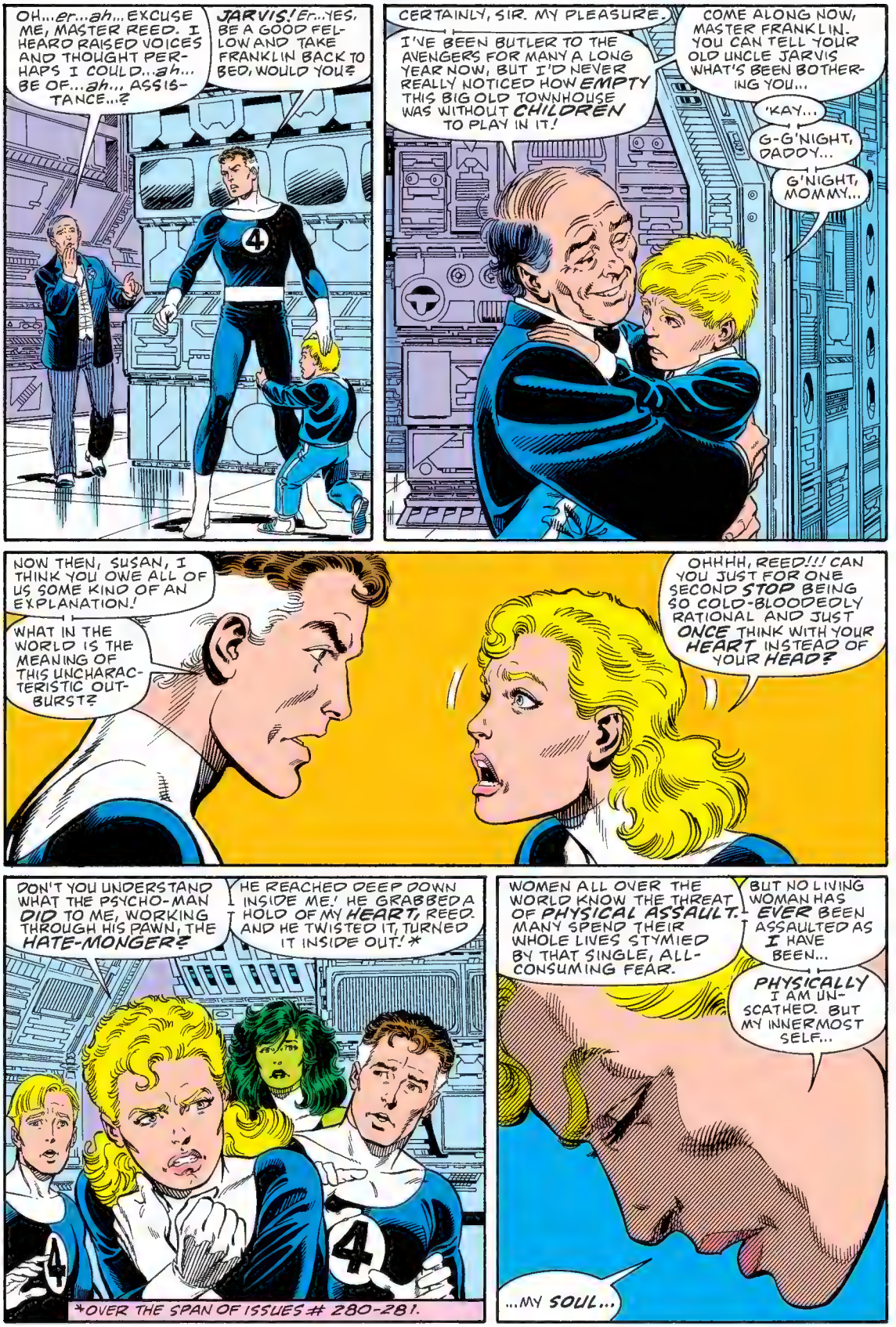

I'M FRANKLIN RICHARDS. MY...
HEY! YOU CAN TALK!
SURE WE CAN. WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS, FRANKLIN. WE CAN HELP...
FRANKLIN! FRANKLIN, QUICK! WE WANT TO HELP YOU.
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO COME TO US, FRANKLIN. WE CAN'T REACH YOU.
COME TO US, FRANKLIN. YOU CAN DO IT! YOU CAN! YOU...


OUFF!!
WHA...?
WHERE...?
I'M BACK IN MY ROOM...
BACK IN 'VENGERS MANSION.* IT WAS ANOTHER DREAM!
*THAT'S AVENGERS MANSION, WHERE THE FF HAVE BEEN STAYING SINCE THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR HEADQUARTERS IN ISSUE #277.
I GOTTA TELL MOMMY AN' DADDY.
GOTTA TELL THEM I HAD ANOTHER SPECIAL DREAM.
HURRY UP, EL'VATOR! I KNOW THEY'RE IN THE BASEMENT.
THERE'S DADDY. WHERE'S MOMMY?
WELL, REED, IS IT READY YET?

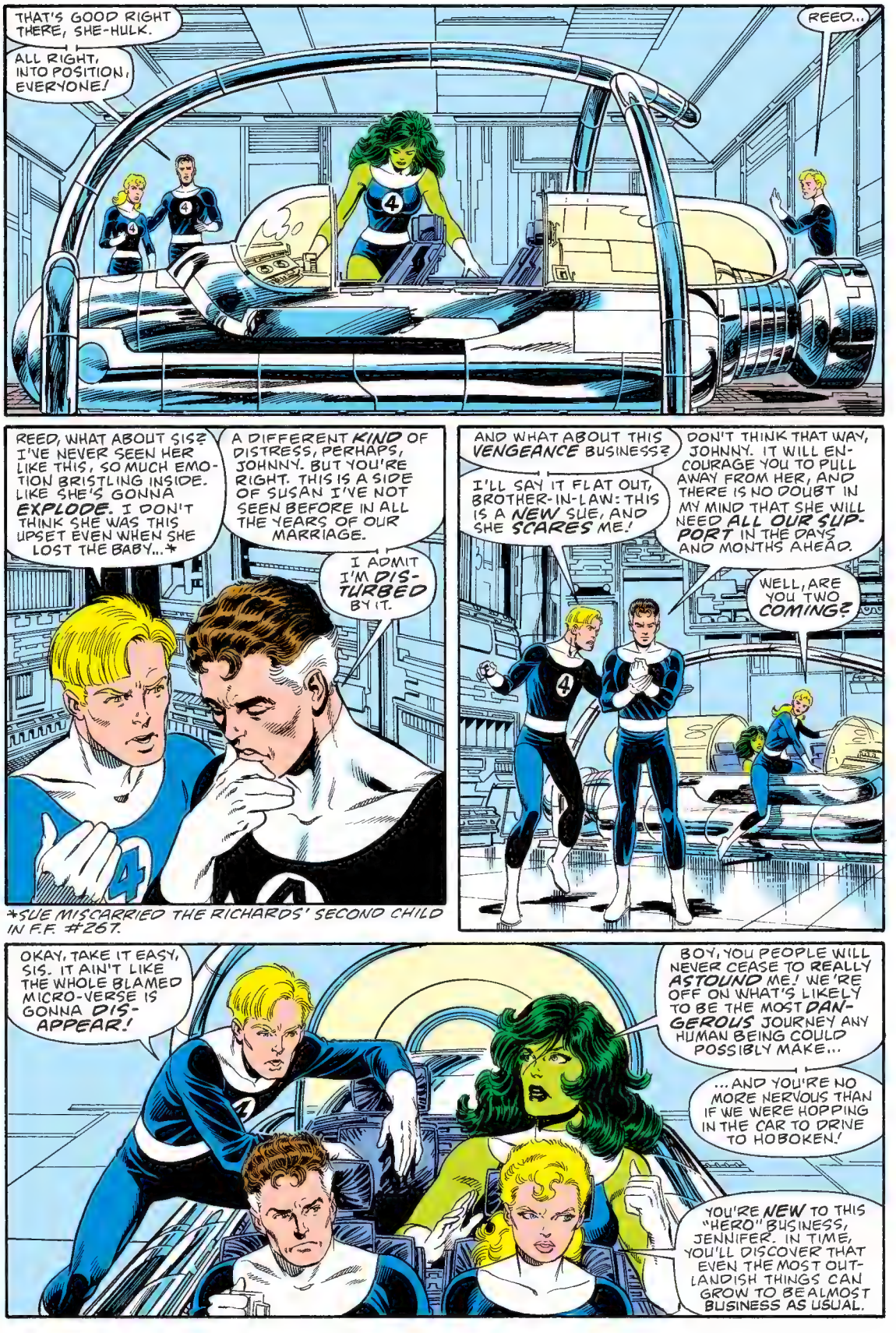
YES, SHE-HULK. I MADE A FEW ADJUSTMENTS IN THE ORIGINAL DESIGN, DICTATED BY RECENTLY ACQUIRED INFORMATION...
...PLUS, OF COURSE, WORKING WITH UNFAMILIAR AVENGERS EQUIPMENT SLOWED ME DOWN SOMEWHAT...
BUT, YES, IT'S FINISHED.
"SLOWED YOU DOWN?" WORKING COMPLETELY FROM MEMORY, YOU'VE RECREATED ONE OF THE SINGLE MOST COMPLEX PIECES OF EQUIPMENT WE HAD BEFORE DOCTOR DOOM BLEW UP THE BAXTER BUILDING...
...AND YOU DID IT IN UNDER SIX HOURS! ALMOST FROM SCRATCH!
TELL ME SOMETHING, TORCH, IS YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW USUALLY THIS MODEST?
NOT USUALLY, NO.
ALL RIGHT, SHAPE UP, YOU TWO. THIS IS NO TIME FOR LEVITY. I'VE REBUILT THE REDUCTO-CRAFT FOR A REASON.
WITH IT, WE MAY BE ABLE TO GO AFTER ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS FOES WE HAVE EVER FACED!
"MAY BE ABLE...?" YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT SURE THIS GIZMO WILL WORK?
NOT AT ALL, SHE-HULK. I KNOW THE REDUCTO-CRAFT WILL FUNCTION PERFECTLY. MY CONCERN IS WHETHER WE SHOULD, IN FACT, USE IT, NOW THAT THE BEYONDER IS ON EARTH.*
WE MAY BE NEEDED HERE!
*SEE SECRET WARS II #2, NOW ON SALE.
BUT... BUT I THOUGHT YOU'D DECIDED OUR PRESENCE WOULDN'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE AGAINST SOMEONE WITH THE BEYONDER'S POWER -- THAT IT'D BE LIKE ONE MORE DROP OF WATER AGAINST A FOREST FIRE.
I KNOW WHAT I SAID, SHE-HULK.
BUT...NOW I DON'T KNOW IF THAT WAS THE CORRECT ASSESSMENT. PERHAPS...
"PERHAPS" NOTHING!

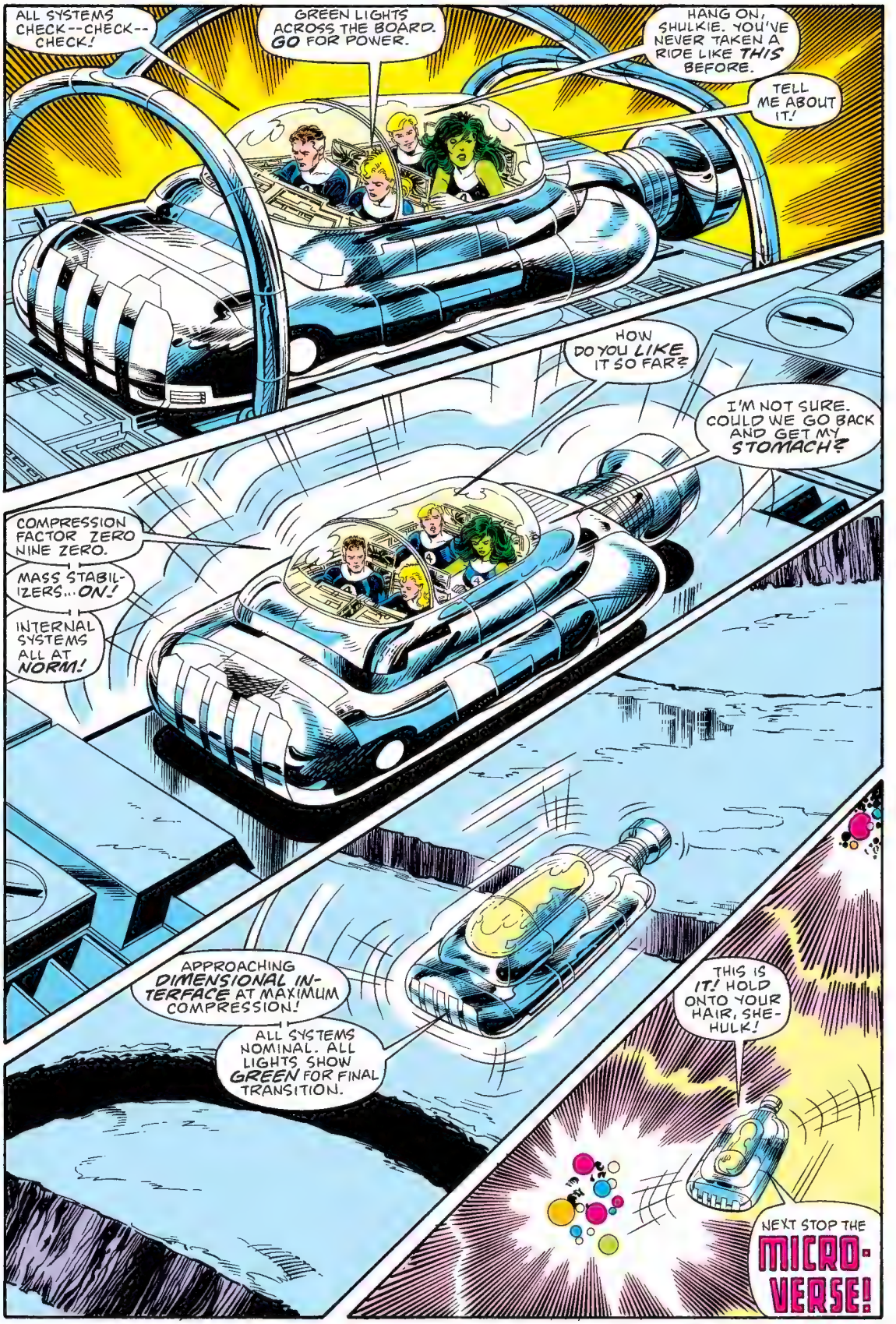
SUSAN! DARLING, ARE YOU RECOVERED?
I WAS, UNTIL I HEARD WHAT YOU JUST SAID.
WE ARE GOING AFTER THE PSYCHO-MAN, REED. WE MUST!
PLEASE, SUE, YOU'VE GOT TO LOOK AT THIS IN TERMS OF THE OVERALL PICTURE.
THE REST OF US HAVE FACED THE BEYONDER BEFORE.* WE HAVE SOME INKLING OF THE AWESOME EXTENT OF HIS POWER.
POWER? DOESN'T THE PSYCHO-MAN HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO INTEREST YOU ANY MORE?
HE CAME VERY CLOSE TO DESTROYING US ALL, REED!
*LAST TIME 'ROUND IN SECRET WARS.
AND THE BEYONDER MIGHT WELL BE HERE TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE PLANET!
DESPITE THE SHAPE HE NOW WEARS, HE IS NOT REMOTELY HUMAN, SUE. EVEN THE MASCULINE PRONOUN IS PROBABLY NOT TRULY APPLICABLE.
YOU'VE SAID ALL THIS BEFORE, REED. YOU'VE ALSO TOLD ME HOW EASILY THIS SO-CALLED BEYONDER WAS ABLE TO MANIPULATE THE MOST POWERFUL SUPERBEINGS IN THE WORLD, GOOD AND BAD.
THEN YOU UNDERSTAND, DARLING? YOU SEE WHY WE REALLY MUST STAY TO LEARN THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS...
NO! NO I DON'T!!
I DON'T CARE WHAT HIS INTENT IS! LET THE AVENGERS WORRY ABOUT HIM! LET SPIDER-MAN AND ALPHA FLIGHT AND THE X-MEN BATTLE HIM!

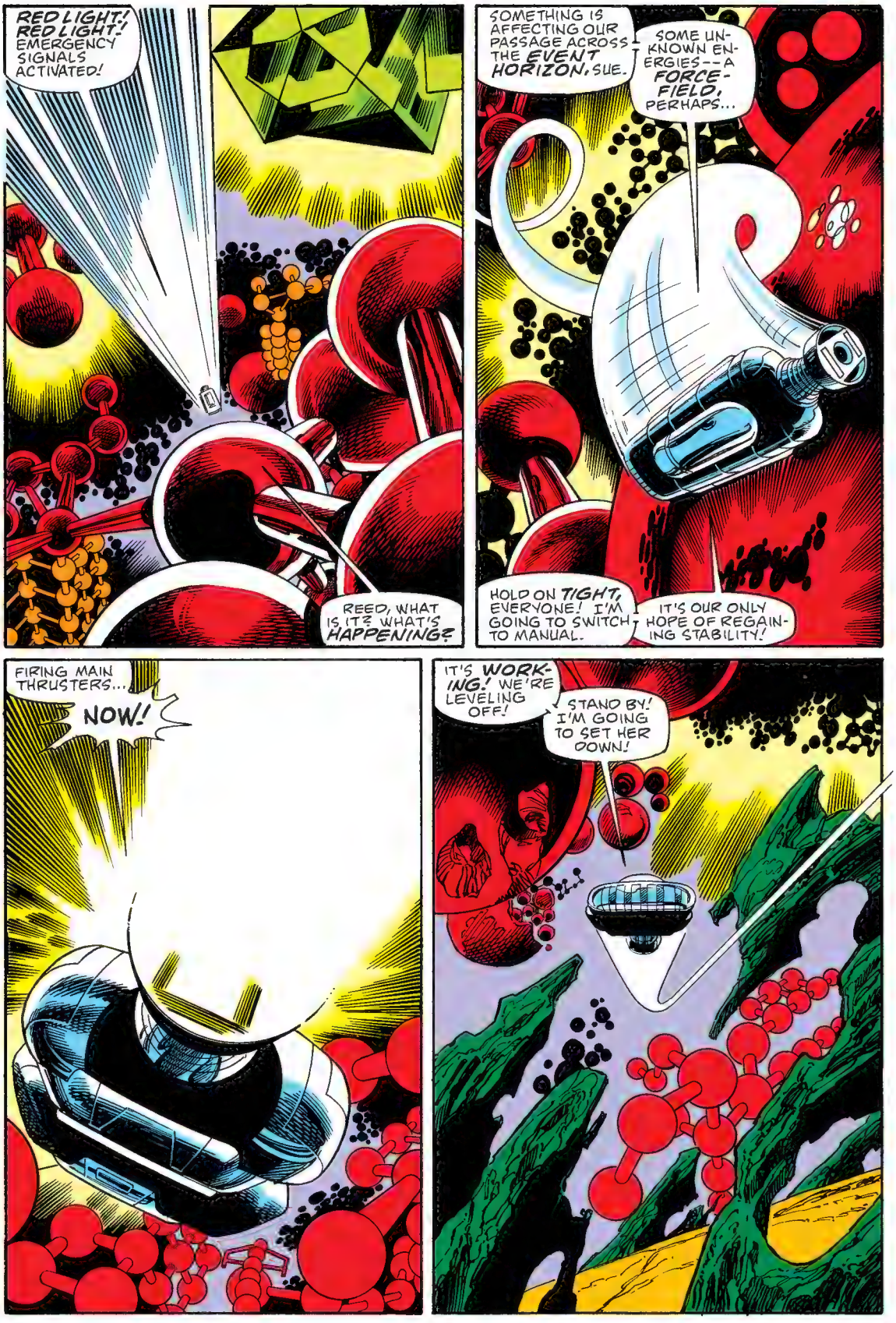

BUT, SUE, WE MUST NOT...
MOMMY! DADDY!
FRANKLIN...?
SON, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
I HAD ANOTHER DREAM, DADDY. ANOTHER DREAM LIKE BEFORE, THAT SEEMED SO REAL.
I THINK IT'S GONNA COME TRUE AGAIN, DADDY!
THERE, THERE NOW, SON. THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, I PROMISE YOU.
YOU'VE HAD TWO DREAMS THAT SEEMED TO COME TRUE, BUT NEITHER WAS AS BAD AS...
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!!
DREAMS! ALIEN INVASIONS!! MONSTERS!!! AND EVERY TIME I'VE HAD TO BE CALM AND QUIET AND UNDERSTANDING!
S-SIS?
WELL, NO MORE! FRANKLIN, YOU GET BACK TO YOUR ROOM THIS INSTANT!!
SUE...DARLING, THE LAD IS UPSET.
THIS IS MOST UNLIKE YOU. I REALLY DON'T THINK...
NO, YOU DON'T, REED! YOU NEVER THINK UNLESS IT'S ABOUT SOME IMPOSSIBLE INVENTION OR UNSTOPPABLE MENACE!
WELL, I SAY ENOUGH!
I'VE SPENT MOST OF MY ADULT LIFE FOLLOWING YOU INTO COUNTLESS BATTLES, RISKING EVERYTHING, EVERYONE I LOVE, TO SAVE THE WORLD ONE MORE TIME!
WELL, THIS TIME IT'S MY TURN!!

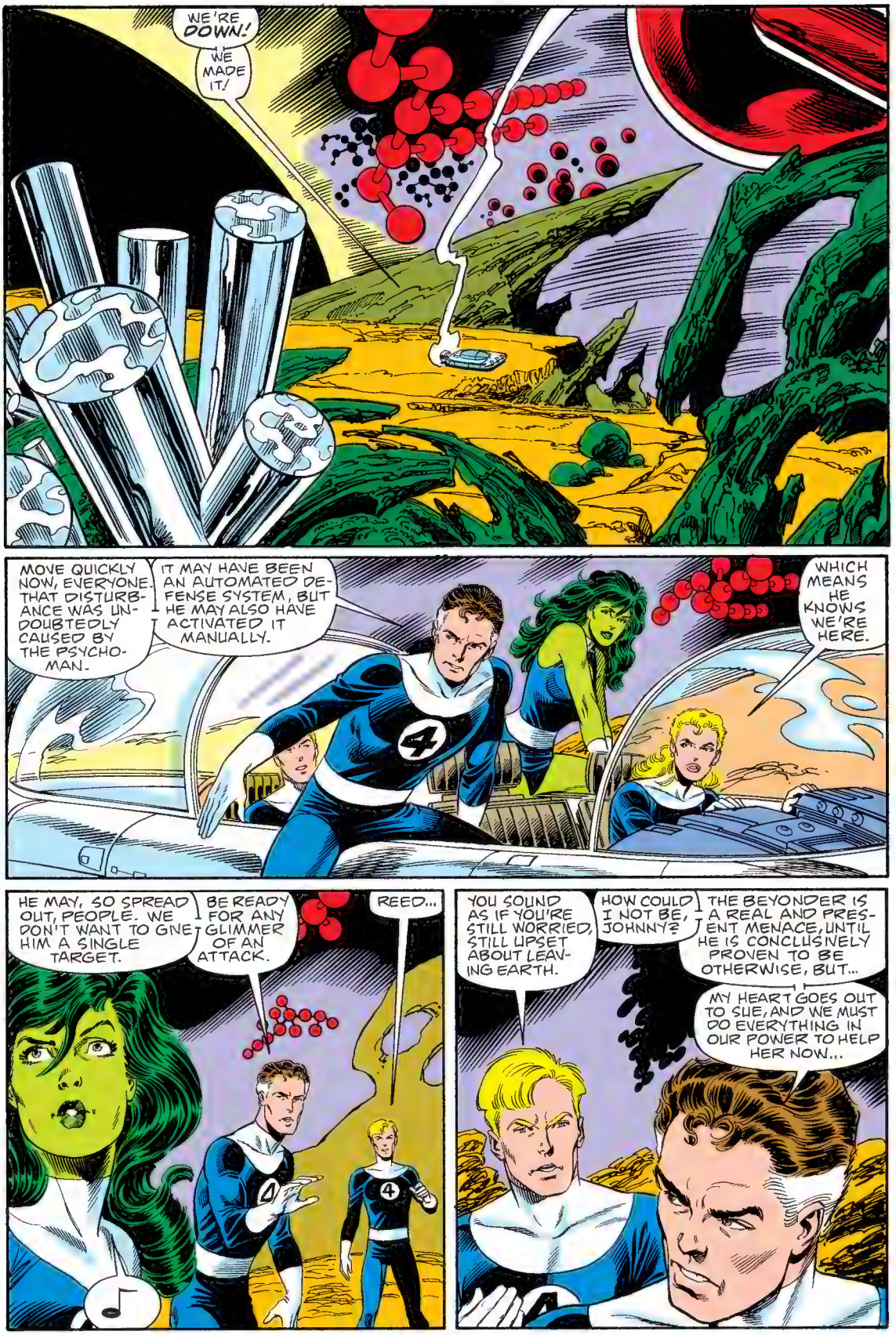

OH...er...ah... EXCUSE ME, MASTER REED. I HEARD RAISED VOICES AND THOUGHT PERHAPS I COULD...ah... BE OF...ah... ASSISTANCE...?
JARVIS! Er...YES, BE A GOOD FELLOW AND TAKE FRANKLIN BACK TO BED, WOULD YOU?
CERTAINLY, SIR. MY PLEASURE.
I'VE BEEN BUTLER TO THE AVENGERS FOR MANY A LONG YEAR NOW, BUT I'D NEVER REALLY NOTICED HOW EMPTY THIS BIG OLD TOWNHOUSE WAS WITHOUT CHILDREN TO PLAY IN IT!
COME ALONG NOW, MASTER FRANKLIN. YOU CAN TELL YOUR OLD UNCLE JARVIS WHAT'S BEEN BOTHERING YOU...
'KAY...
G-G'NIGHT, DADDY...
G'NIGHT, MOMMY...
NOW THEN, SUSAN, I THINK YOU OWE ALL OF US SOME KIND OF AN EXPLANATION!
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THE MEANING OF THIS UNCHARACTERISTIC OUTBURST?
OHHHH, REED!!! CAN YOU JUST FOR ONE SECOND STOP BEING SO COLD-BLOODEDLY RATIONAL AND JUST ONCE THINK WITH YOUR HEART INSTEAD OF YOUR HEAD?
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PSYCHO-MAN DID TO ME, WORKING THROUGH HIS PAWN, THE HATE-MONGER?
HE REACHED DEEP DOWN INSIDE ME! HE GRABBED A HOLD OF MY HEART, REED. AND HE TWISTED IT, TURNED IT INSIDE OUT! *
*OVER THE SPAN OF ISSUES # 280-281.
WOMEN ALL OVER THE WORLD KNOW THE THREAT OF PHYSICAL ASSAULT. MANY SPEND THEIR WHOLE LIVES STYMIED BY THAT SINGLE, ALL-CONSUMING FEAR.
BUT NO LIVING WOMAN HAS EVER BEEN ASSAULTED AS I HAVE BEEN...
PHYSICALLY I AM UNSCATHED. BUT MY INNERMOST SELF...
...MY SOUL...

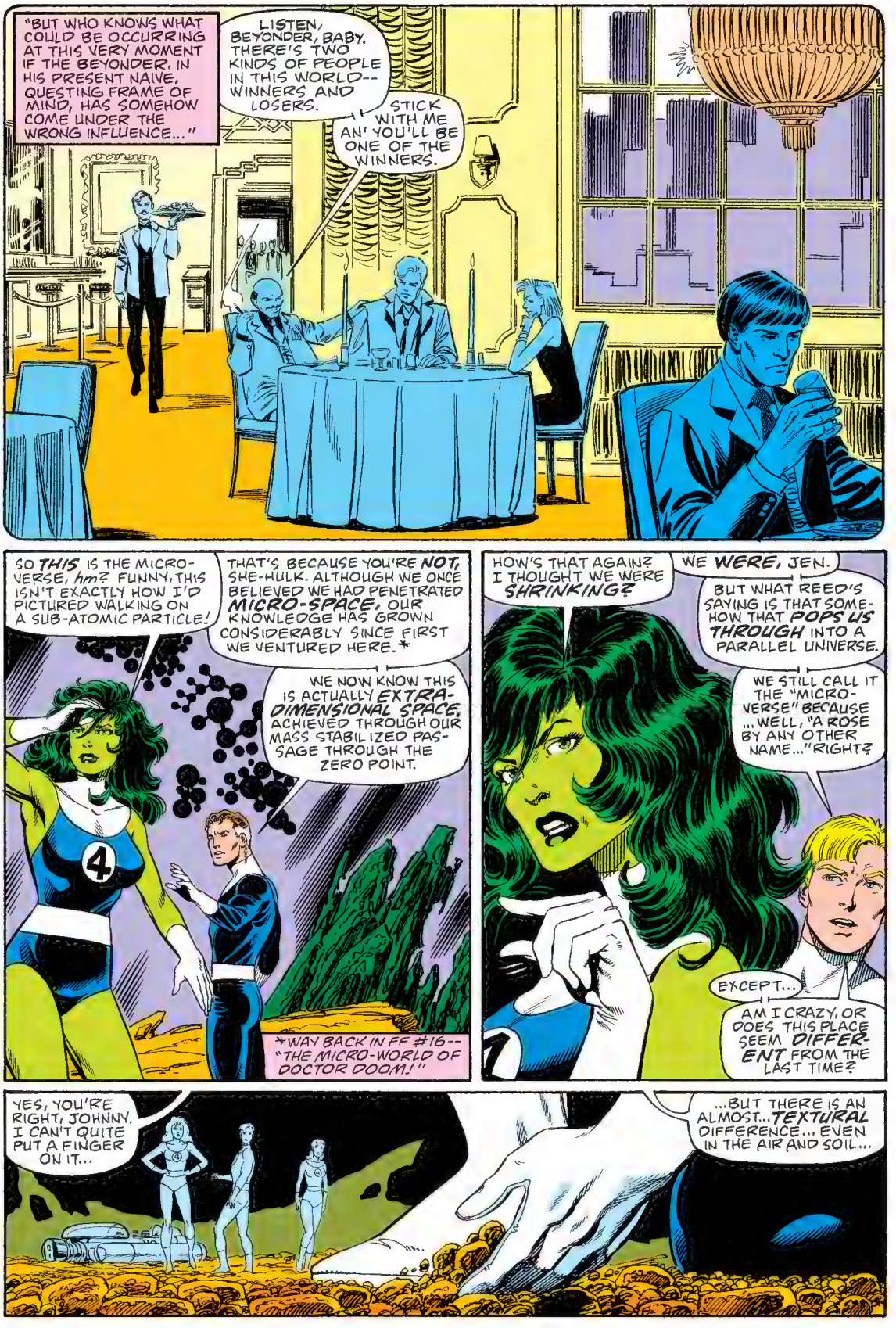
DON'T YOU SEE, REED? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, ANY OF YOU?
SUE... DARLING...
I...I'M SORRY. I CONFESS I HAD NO IDEA! OF COURSE, THIS MUST TAKE PRIORITY!
YOU MUST HAVE JUSTICE!
NO. NOT JUSTICE. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN JUSTICE, REED.
WHAT I WANT IS VENGEANCE!
Y-YES...
SHE-HULK, WILL YOU MOVE THE REDUCTO-CRAFT TO THE STAGING AREA?
SURE, IF YOU THINK IT'S STRONG ENOUGH TO BE HANDLED THAT WAY?
IT IS, SHE HULK. IT'S VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE.
AS IT WILL NEED TO BE, TO SAFELY CARRY US WHERE WE MUST NOW GO...

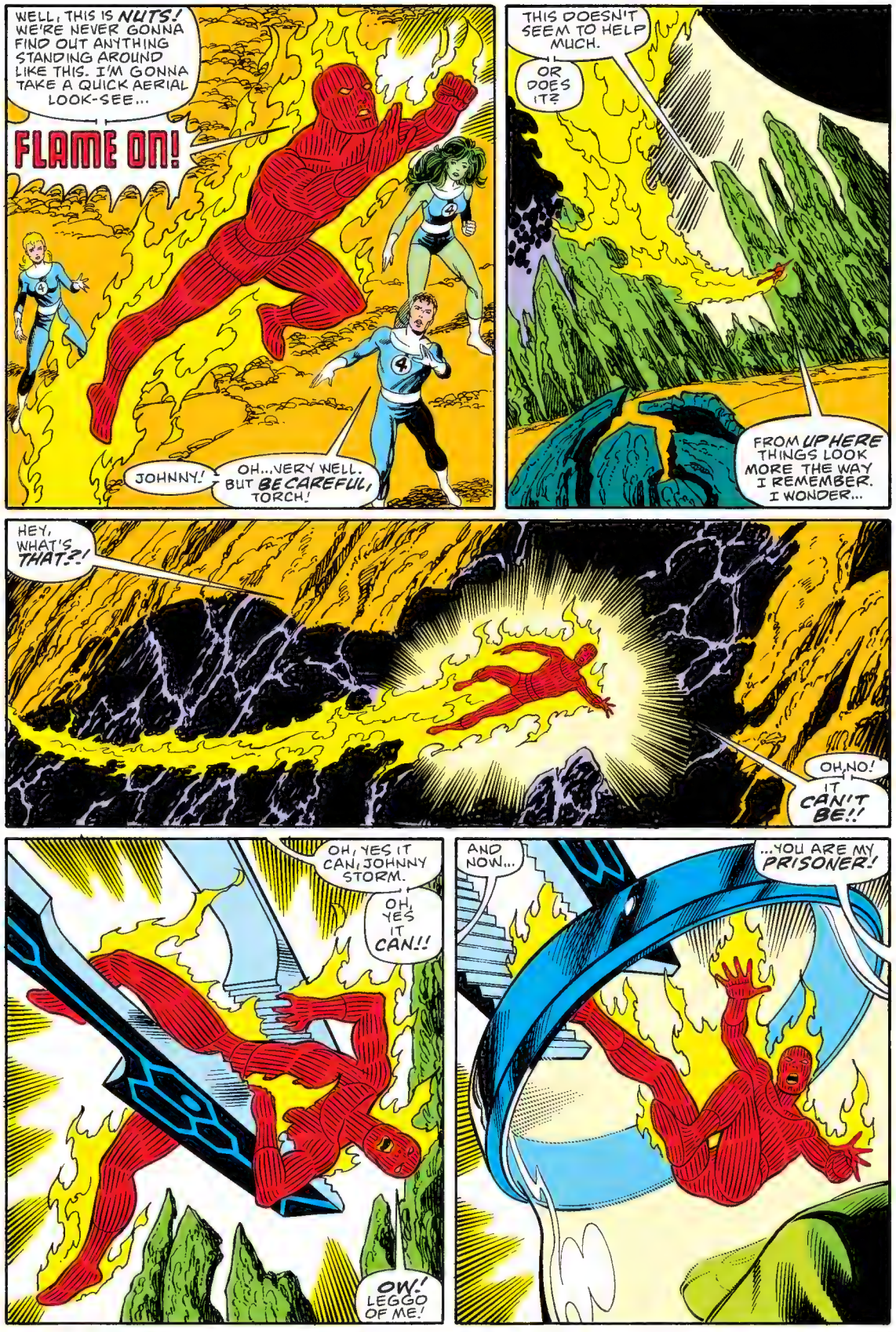

THAT'S GOOD RIGHT THERE, SHE-HULK.
ALL RIGHT, INTO POSITION, EVERYONE!
REED...
REED, WHAT ABOUT SIS? I'VE NEVER SEEN HER LIKE THIS, SO MUCH EMOTION BRISTLING INSIDE. LIKE SHE'S GONNA EXPLODE. I DON'T THINK SHE WAS THIS UPSET EVEN WHEN SHE LOST THE BABY...*
A DIFFERENT KIND OF DISTRESS, PERHAPS, JOHNNY. BUT YOU'RE RIGHT. THIS IS A SIDE OF SUSAN I'VE NOT SEEN BEFORE IN ALL THE YEARS OF OUR MARRIAGE.
I ADMIT I'M DISTURBED BY IT.
AND WHAT ABOUT THIS VENGEANCE BUSINESS?
I'LL SAY IT FLAT OUT, BROTHER-IN-LAW: THIS IS A NEW SUE, AND SHE SCARES ME!
DON'T THINK THAT WAY, JOHNNY. IT WILL ENCOURAGE YOU TO PULL AWAY FROM HER, AND THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT SHE WILL NEED ALL OUR SUPPORT IN THE DAYS AND MONTHS AHEAD.
WELL, ARE YOU TWO COMING?
*SUE MISCARRIED THE RICHARDS' SECOND CHILD IN F.F. #267.
OKAY, TAKE IT EASY, SIS. IT AIN'T LIKE THE WHOLE BLAMED MICRO-VERSE IS GONNA DISAPPEAR!
BOY, YOU PEOPLE WILL NEVER CEASE TO REALLY ASTOUND ME! WE'RE OFF ON WHAT'S LIKELY TO BE THE MOST DANGEROUS JOURNEY ANY HUMAN BEING COULD POSSIBLY MAKE...
...AND YOU'RE NO MORE NERVOUS THAN IF WE WERE HOPPING IN THE CAR TO DRIVE TO HOBOKEN!
YOU'RE NEW TO THIS "HERO" BUSINESS, JENNIFER. IN TIME, YOU'LL DISCOVER THAT EVEN THE MOST OUTLANDISH THINGS CAN GROW TO BE ALMOST BUSINESS AS USUAL.


ALL SYSTEMS CHECK--CHECK--CHECK!
GREEN LIGHTS ACROSS THE BOARD. GO FOR POWER.
HANG ON, SHULKIE. YOU'VE NEVER TAKEN A RIDE LIKE THIS BEFORE.
TELL ME ABOUT IT!
HOW DO YOU LIKE IT SO FAR?
I'M NOT SURE. COULD WE GO BACK AND GET MY STOMACH?
COMPRESSION FACTOR ZERO NINE ZERO.
MASS STABILIZERS...ON!
INTERNAL SYSTEMS ALL AT NORM!
APPROACHING DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE AT MAXIMUM COMPRESSION!
ALL SYSTEMS NOMINAL. ALL LIGHTS SHOW GREEN FOR FINAL TRANSITION.
THIS IS IT! HOLD ONTO YOUR HAIR, SHE-HULK!
NEXT STOP THE MICRO-VERSE!


RED LIGHT! RED LIGHT! EMERGENCY SIGNALS ACTIVATED!
REED, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
SOMETHING IS AFFECTING OUR PASSAGE ACROSS THE EVENT HORIZON, SUE.
SOME UNKNOWN ENERGIES--A FORCE-FIELD, PERHAPS...
HOLD ON TIGHT, EVERYONE! I'M GOING TO SWITCH TO MANUAL.
IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE OF REGAINING STABILITY!
FIRING MAIN THRUSTERS...
NOW!
IT'S WORKING! WE'RE LEVELING OFF!
STAND BY! I'M GOING TO SET HER DOWN!


WE'RE DOWN!
WE MADE IT!
MOVE QUICKLY NOW, EVERYONE. THAT DISTURBANCE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSED BY THE PSYCHO-MAN.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN AUTOMATED DEFENSE SYSTEM, BUT HE MAY ALSO HAVE ACTIVATED IT MANUALLY.
WHICH MEANS HE KNOWS WE'RE HERE.
HE MAY, SO SPREAD OUT, PEOPLE. WE DON'T WANT TO GIVE HIM A SINGLE TARGET.
BE READY FOR ANY GLIMMER OF AN ATTACK.
REED...
YOU SOUND AS IF YOU'RE STILL WORRIED, STILL UPSET ABOUT LEAVING EARTH.
HOW COULD I NOT BE, JOHNNY?
THE BEYONDER IS A REAL AND PRESENT MENACE, UNTIL HE IS CONCLUSIVELY PROVEN TO BE OTHERWISE, BUT...
MY HEART GOES OUT TO SUE, AND WE MUST DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO HELP HER NOW...


"BUT WHO KNOWS WHAT COULD BE OCCURRING AT THIS VERY MOMENT IF THE BEYONDER, IN HIS PRESENT NAIVE, QUESTING FRAME OF MIND, HAS SOMEHOW COME UNDER THE WRONG INFLUENCE..."
LISTEN, BEYONDER, BABY. THERE'S TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD--WINNERS AND LOSERS.
STICK WITH ME AN' YOU'LL BE ONE OF THE WINNERS.
SO THIS IS THE MICRO-VERSE, hm? FUNNY, THIS ISN'T EXACTLY HOW I'D PICTURED WALKING ON A SUB-ATOMIC PARTICLE!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT, SHE-HULK. ALTHOUGH WE ONCE BELIEVED WE HAD PENETRATED MICRO-SPACE, OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS GROWN CONSIDERABLY SINCE FIRST WE VENTURED HERE.*
WE NOW KNOW THIS IS ACTUALLY EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL SPACE, ACHIEVED THROUGH OUR MASS STABILIZED PASSAGE THROUGH THE ZERO POINT.
*WAY BACK IN FF #16--"THE MICRO-WORLD OF DOCTOR DOOM!"
HOW'S THAT AGAIN? I THOUGHT WE WERE SHRINKING?
WE WERE, JEN.
BUT WHAT REED'S SAYING IS THAT SOMEHOW THAT POPS US THROUGH INTO A PARALLEL UNIVERSE.
WE STILL CALL IT THE "MICRO-VERSE" BECAUSE ...WELL, "A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME..." RIGHT?
EXCEPT...
AM I CRAZY, OR DOES THIS PLACE SEEM DIFFERENT FROM THE LAST TIME?
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT, JOHNNY. I CAN'T QUITE PUT A FINGER ON IT...
...BUT THERE IS AN ALMOST...TEXTURAL DIFFERENCE... EVEN IN THE AIR AND SOIL...


WELL, THIS IS NUTS! WE'RE NEVER GONNA FIND OUT ANYTHING STANDING AROUND LIKE THIS. I'M GONNA TAKE A QUICK AERIAL LOOK-SEE...
FLAME ON!
JOHNNY!
OH...VERY WELL. BUT BE CAREFUL, TORCH!
THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO HELP MUCH.
OR DOES IT?
FROM UP HERE THINGS LOOK MORE THE WAY I REMEMBER. I WONDER...
HEY, WHAT'S THAT?!
OH, NO! IT CAN'T BE!!
OH, YES IT CAN, JOHNNY STORM.
OH, YES IT CAN!!
OW! LEGGO OF ME!
AND NOW...
...YOU ARE MY PRISONER!

GOTTA WARN THE OTHERS!
ONE CHANCE...
REED!
OUR EMERGENCY SIGNAL THE TORCH IS IN TROUBLE!
WHAT CAN HAVE HAPPENED?
DON'T WASTE ENERGY ON SPECULATION, SHE-HULK.
WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH WHAT...
HEY!
LOOK OUT!
WE'RE TRAPPED!
THIS CRYSTALLINE SUBSTANCE IS FAMILIAR TO ME...
...AND ALMOST INDESTRUCTIBLE!
I'M SO PLEASED YOU APPRECIATE MY LITTLE EFFORTS, MY OLD FOE...

NEXT ISSUE:

THE PSYCHO-MAN AT HIS MOST VILLAINOUS, PLUS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR THE INVISIBLE GIRL...

TORMENT!

IT'S NOT TO BE MISSED!

IN 30 DAYS

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
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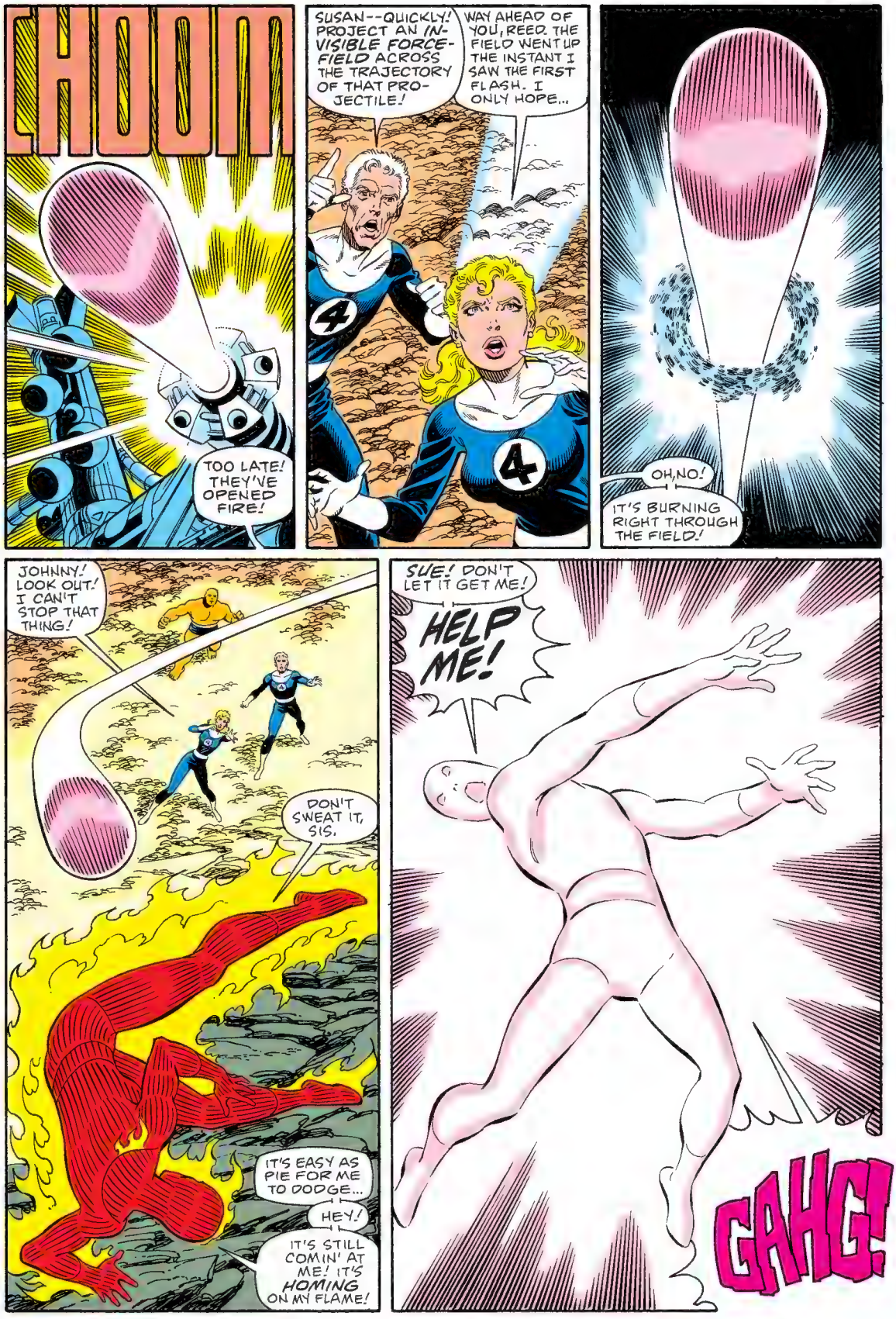
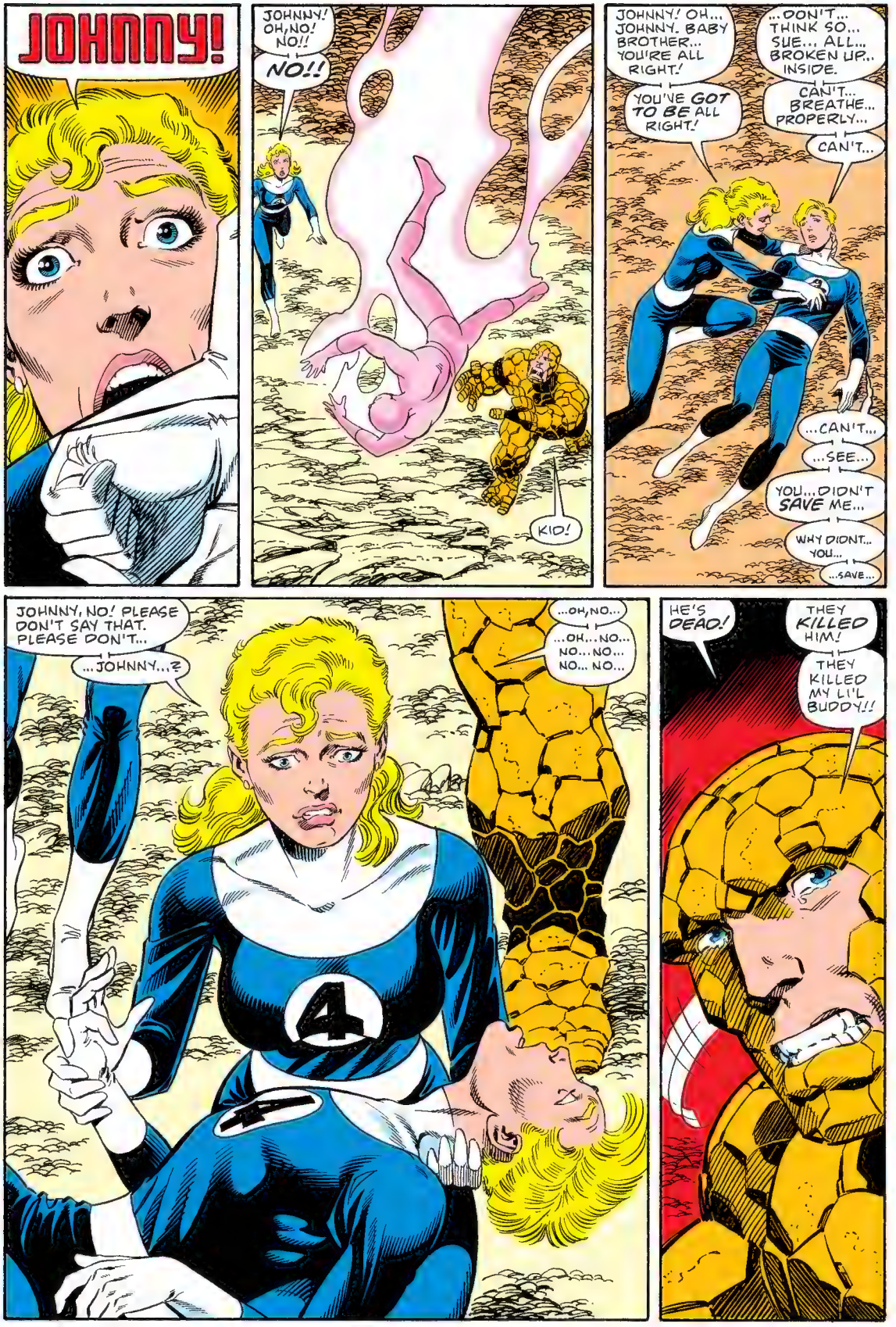
JOHN BYRNE & JERRY ORDWAY

STAN LEE presents
TORMENT
by JOHN BYRNE / PENCILER-SCRIPTER | JERRY ORDWAY / INKER | JOHN WORKMAN / LETTERER | GLYNIS OLIVER / COLORIST | MICHAEL CARLIN / EDITOR | JIM SHOOTER / EDITOR IN CHIEF
"FEAR AT MY HEART, AS AT A CUP MY LIFEBLOOD SEEMED TO SIP."
"THE ANCIENT MARINER"
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
(1772-1834)
NOOOOOOOOO

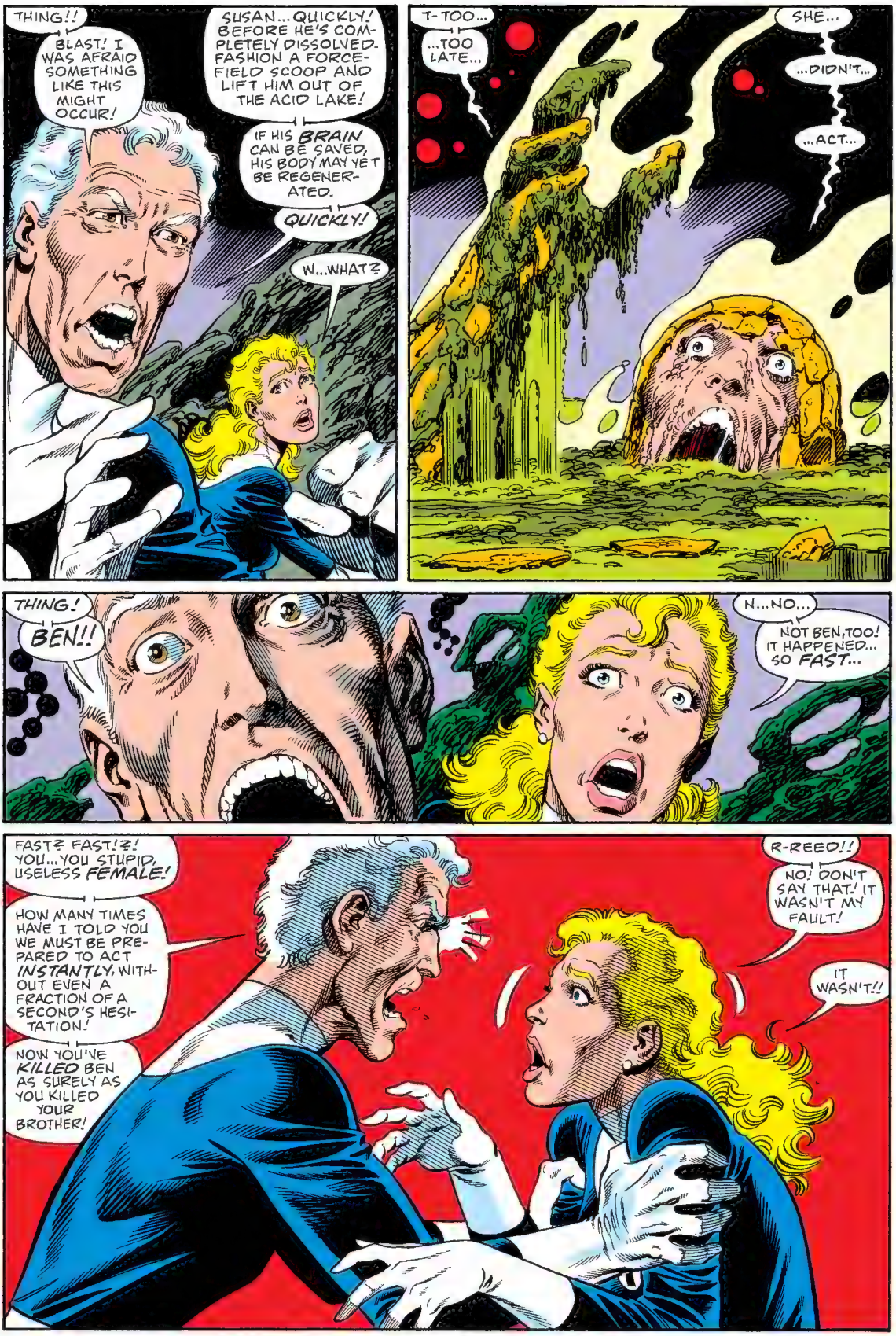
SUSAN!
REED!
REED, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT-- ALL THREE OF YOU. I THOUGHT...
I'D SAY YOU WERE NOT THINKING TOO CLEARLY AT ALL, SUSAN. OF COURSE WE ARE ALL RIGHT.
IT'S YOU WHO WERE IN DEADLY DANGER.
WHAT...?
REED, THERE'S NO CALL TO TAKE THAT ATTITUDE! I WAS TRYING TO HELP YOU.
YEAH, DON'T BE SUCH A WET BLANKET ALL TH' TIME, BIG BRAIN.
SUZIE ALMOST GOT HERSELF KILLED, AND SHE WUZ TRYIN' TA SAVE OUR HIDES.
PERHAPS, BUT SINCE OUR "HIDES" WERE MOST DEMONSTRATIVELY IN NO NEED OF SAVING, IF MY WIFE HAD IN FACT BEEN KILLED ON OUR BEHALF, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TO NO GOOD PURPOSE.
TORCH, HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR SCOUTING?
SURE HAVE, REED. THIS IS ONE WEIRD PLACE!

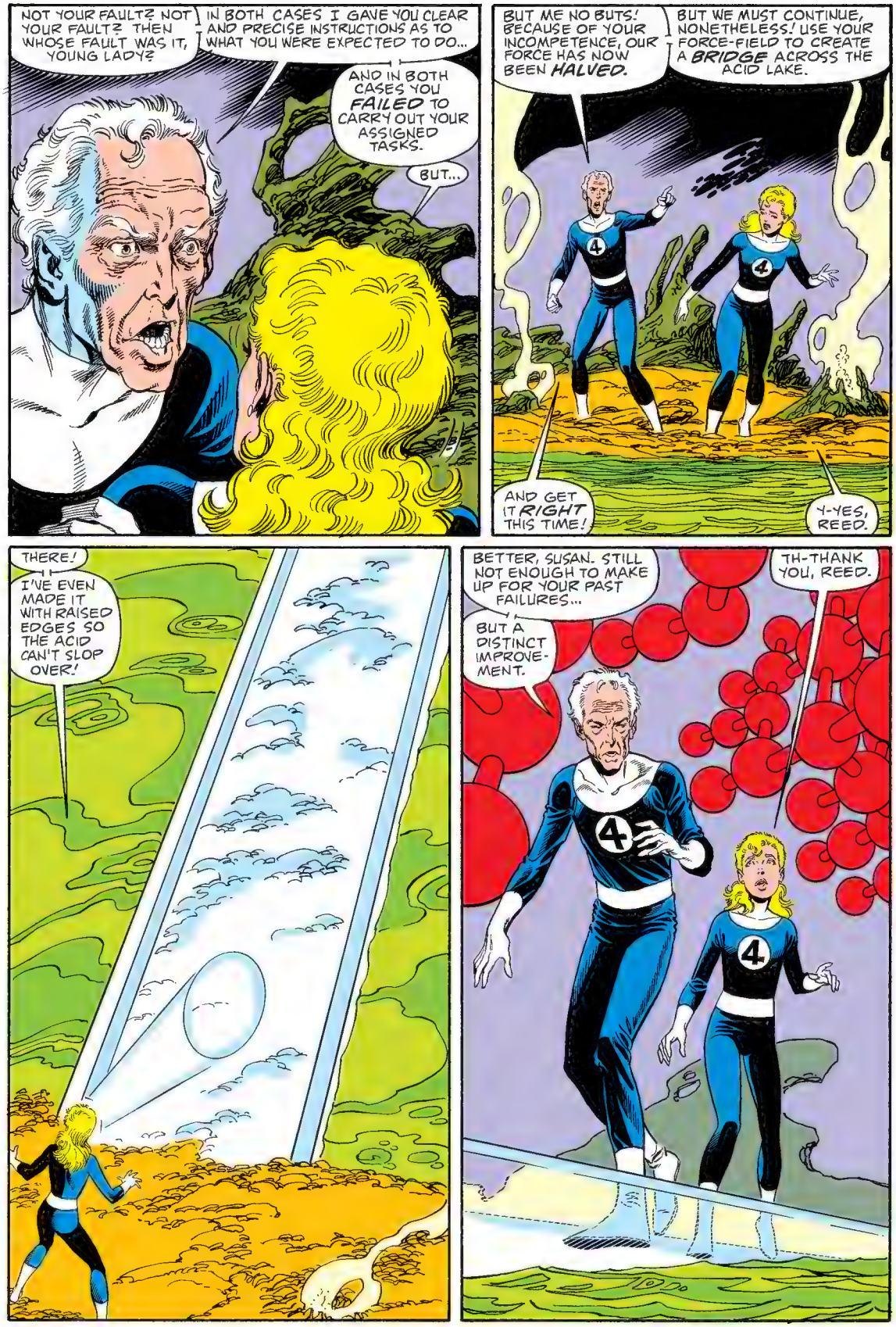
SAVE YOUR OPINIONS FOR SUCH TIME AS I ASK FOR THEM, JOHNNY.
S-SORRY, REED. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY SIGN OF LIFE, BUT THERE'S A BIG, WEIR--er--A BIG COMPLEX OVER THAT RIDGE, ABOUT A MILE AWAY.
NOW, REPORT THE FACTS AS YOU OBSERVED THEM.
GOOD WORK, LAD! YOU SEE HOW EASY IT CAN BE WHEN YOU STICK TO THE FACTS.
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE--OUR ONLY CLUE TO WHAT'S GOING ON LIES IN THAT COMPLEX! LET'S GET OVER THERE!
NOW YER TALKIN', STRETCHO. I'M ABOUT READY TA BUST IF I DON'T FIND ME SOMETHIN I CAN CLOBBER!
THERE IT IS! SURE IS UNEARTHLY!
AN UNDERSTATEMENT AT BEST, TORCH, SINCE WE ARE CLEARLY NOT ON EARTH. NOW, GET DOWN BEFORE...

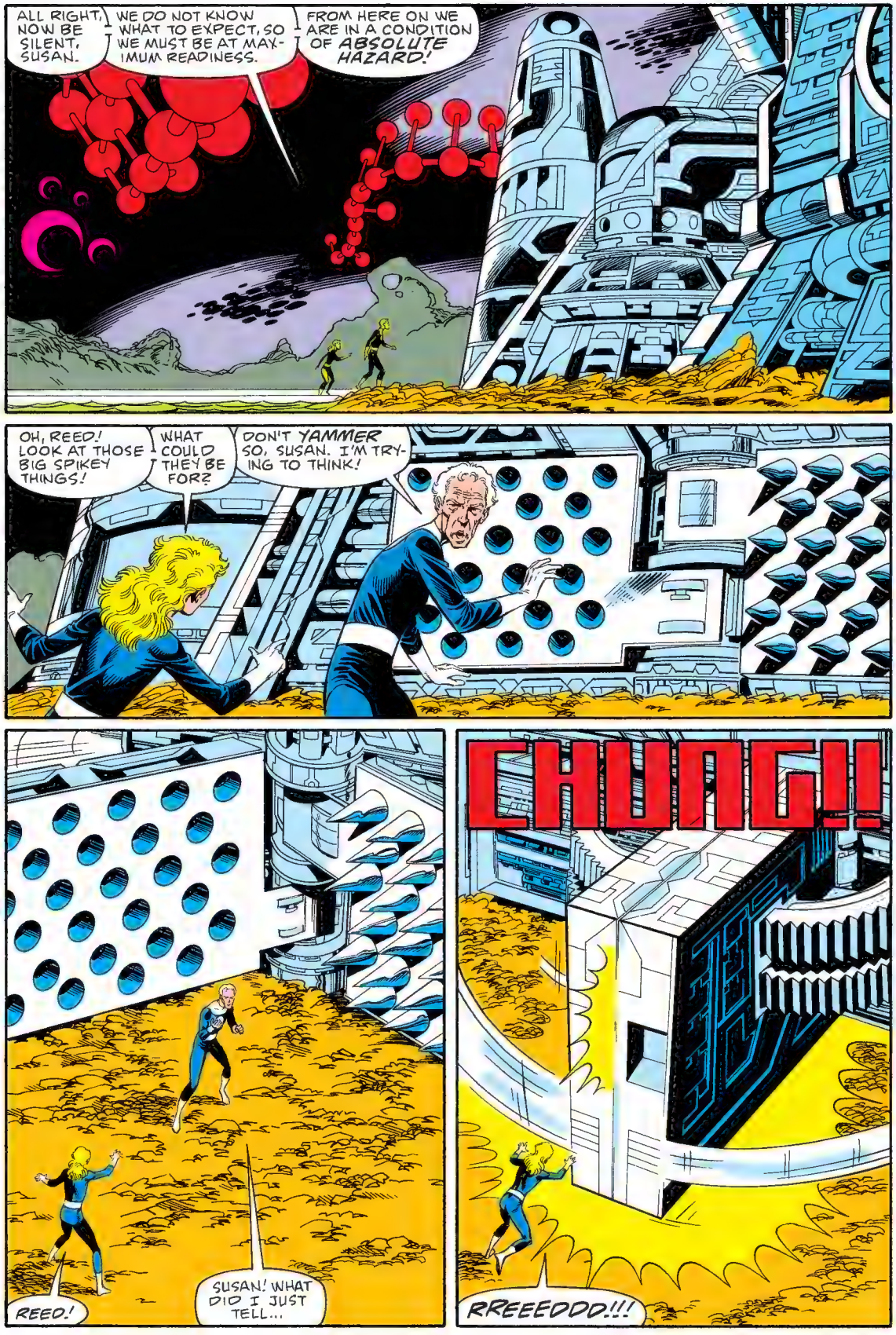

KHOOM
TOO LATE! THEY'VE OPENED FIRE!
SUSAN--QUICKLY! PROJECT AN *INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD* ACROSS THE TRAJECTORY OF THAT PROJECTILE!
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, REED. THE FIELD WENT UP THE INSTANT I SAW THE FIRST FLASH. I ONLY HOPE...
OH,NO!
IT'S BURNING RIGHT THROUGH THE FIELD!
JOHNNY! LOOK OUT! I CAN'T STOP THAT THING!
DON'T SWEAT IT, SIS.
IT'S EASY AS PIE FOR ME TO DODGE...
HEY!
IT'S STILL COMIN' AT ME! IT'S *HOMING* ON MY FLAME!
SUE! DON'T LET IT GET ME!
HELP ME!
GAHG!

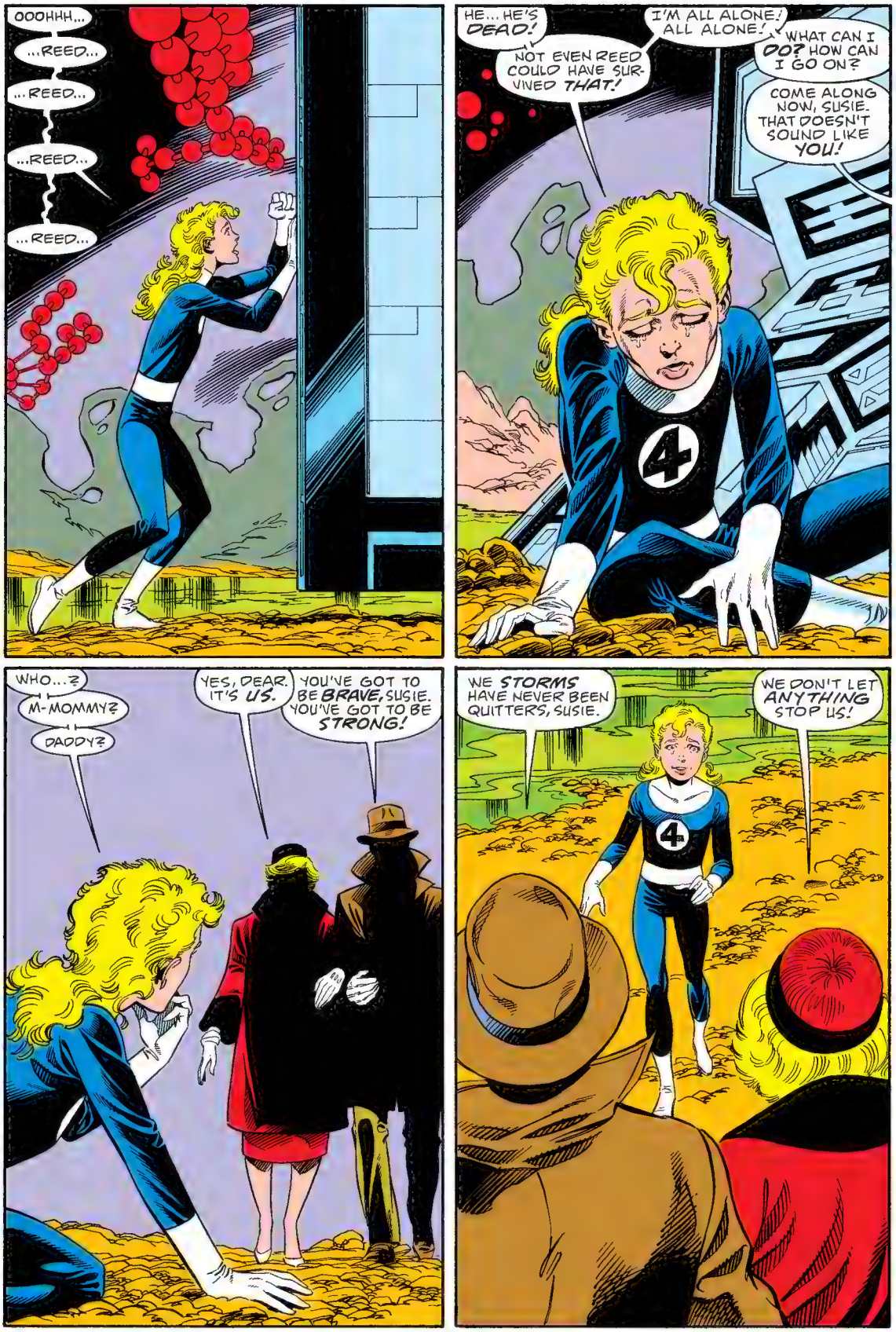

JOHNNY!
JOHNNY! OH, NO! NO!!
NO!!
KID!
JOHNNY! OH... JOHNNY. BABY BROTHER... YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE ALL RIGHT!
...DON'T... THINK SO... SUE... ALL... BROKEN UP... INSIDE.
CAN'T... BREATHE... PROPERLY...
CAN'T...
...CAN'T...
...SEE...
YOU...DIDN'T SAVE ME...
WHY DIDN'T... YOU...
...SAVE...
JOHNNY, NO! PLEASE DON'T SAY THAT. PLEASE DON'T...
...JOHNNY...?
...OH, NO...
...OH...NO... NO...NO... NO... NO...
HE'S DEAD!
THEY KILLED HIM!
THEY KILLED MY LI'L BUDDY!!

THOSE CREEPS! THOSE LOUSY, STINKIN' CREEPS! I'LL SMASH 'EM!
I'LL RIP 'EM APART WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS!!
WHAT...?
THING! NO! WAIT! BE CAREFUL!
SAVE YER WHININ', STRETCHO. I AIN'T IN NO MOOD TA...
HUH...?!?
YAHHG!
THE LAKE!
IT'S...
ACID!
IT'S EATIN' ME AWAY!
EATIN' ME ALIVE!!

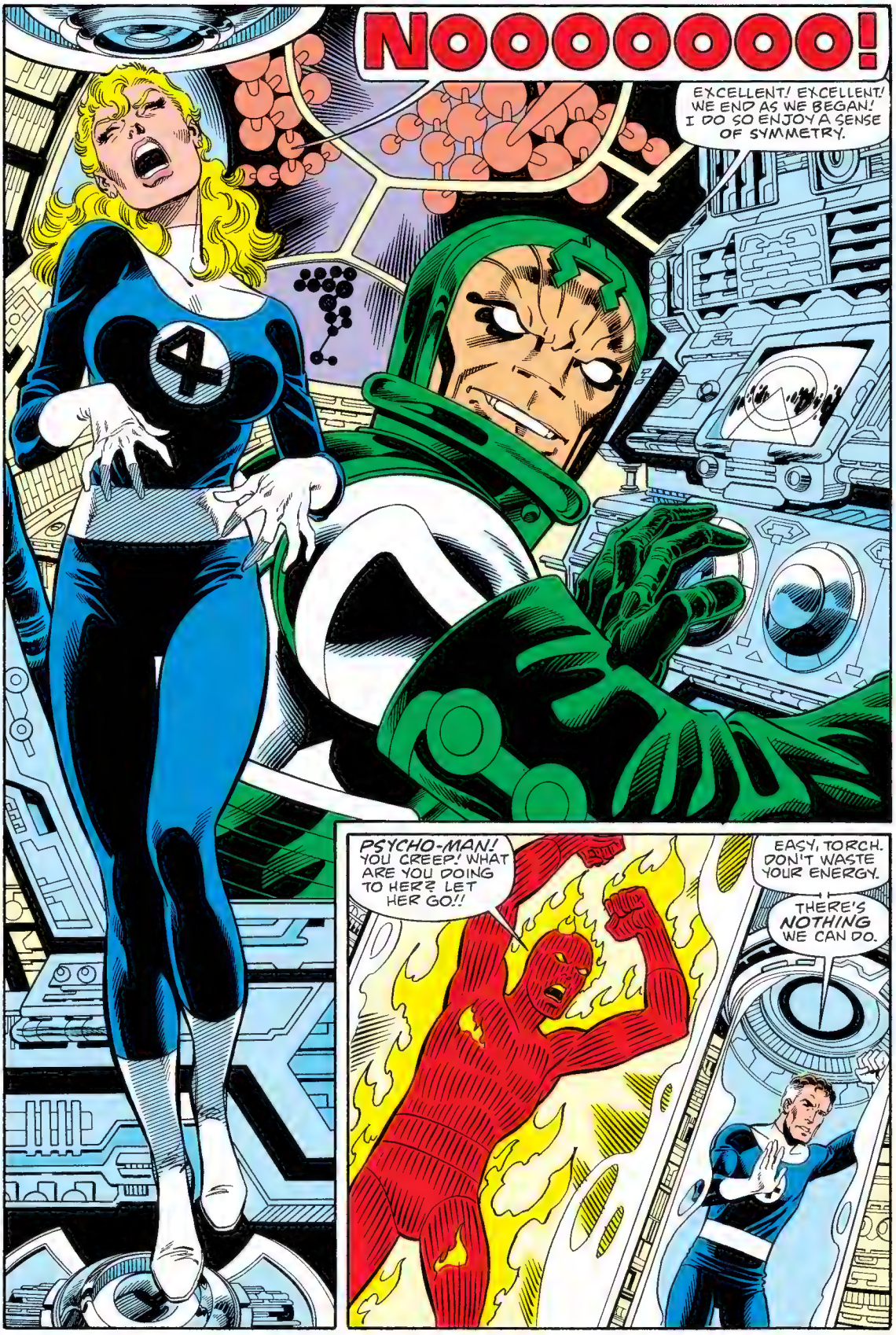

THING!!
BLAST! I WAS AFRAID SOMETHING LIKE THIS MIGHT OCCUR!
SUSAN... QUICKLY! BEFORE HE'S COMPLETELY DISSOLVED. FASHION A FORCE-FIELD SCOOP AND LIFT HIM OUT OF THE ACID LAKE!
IF HIS BRAIN CAN BE SAVED, HIS BODY MAY YET BE REGENERATED.
QUICKLY!
W...WHAT?
T-TOO...
...TOO LATE...
SHE...
...DIDN'T...
...ACT...
THING!
BEN!!
N...NO...
NOT BEN, TOO! IT HAPPENED... SO FAST...
FAST? FAST!? YOU...YOU STUPID, USELESS FEMALE!
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU WE MUST BE PREPARED TO ACT INSTANTLY, WITHOUT EVEN A FRACTION OF A SECOND'S HESITATION!
NOW YOU'VE KILLED BEN AS SURELY AS YOU KILLED YOUR BROTHER!
R-REED!!
NO! DON'T SAY THAT! IT WASN'T MY FAULT!
IT WASN'T!!

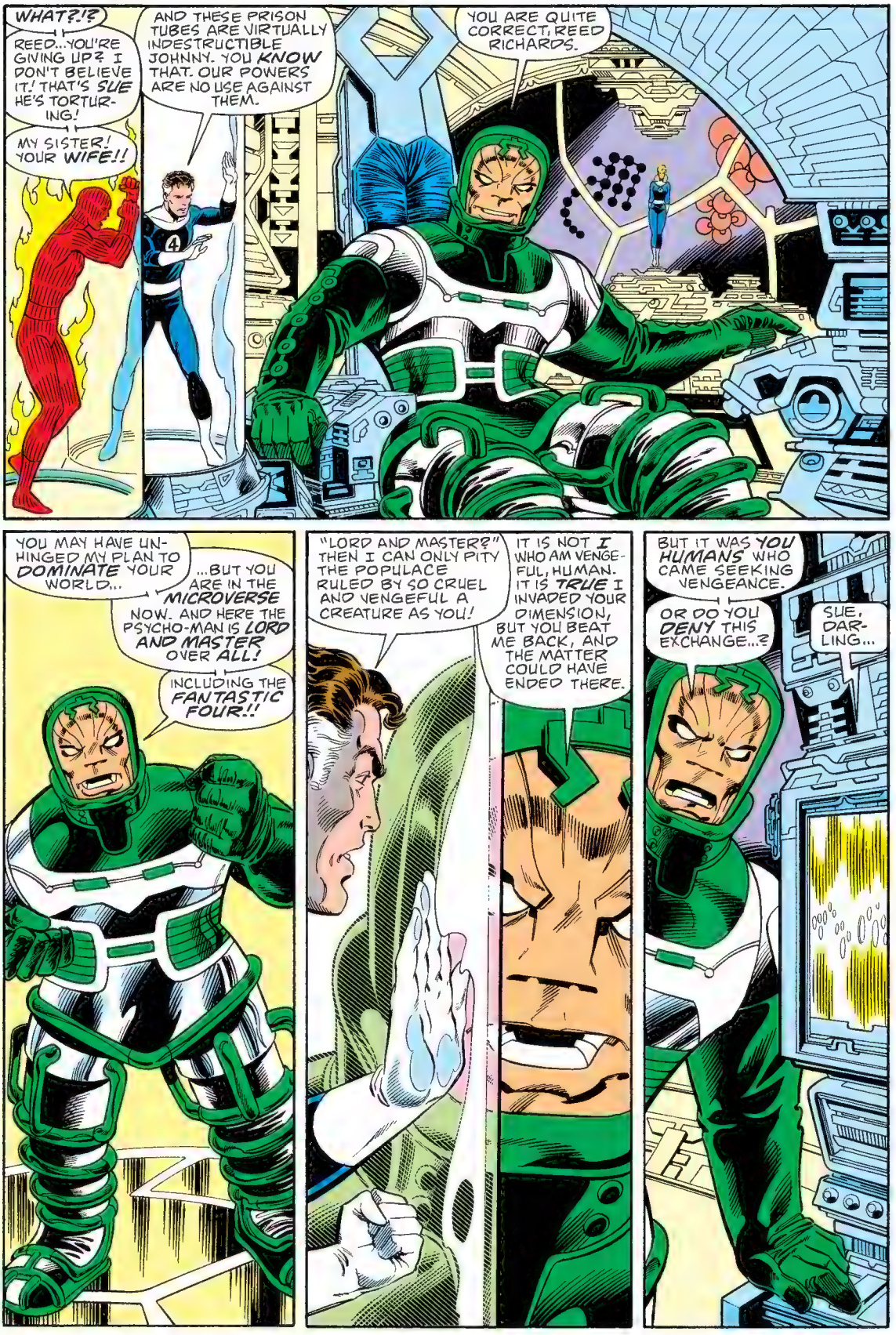

NOT YOUR FAULT? NOT YOUR FAULT? THEN WHOSE FAULT WAS IT, YOUNG LADY?
IN BOTH CASES I GAVE YOU CLEAR AND PRECISE INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHAT YOU WERE EXPECTED TO DO...
AND IN BOTH CASES YOU FAILED TO CARRY OUT YOUR ASSIGNED TASKS.
BUT...
BUT ME NO BUTS! BECAUSE OF YOUR INCOMPETENCE, OUR FORCE HAS NOW BEEN HALVED.
BUT WE MUST CONTINUE, NONETHELESS! USE YOUR FORCE-FIELD TO CREATE A BRIDGE ACROSS THE ACID LAKE.
AND GET IT RIGHT THIS TIME!
Y-YES, REED.
THERE!
I'VE EVEN MADE IT WITH RAISED EDGES SO THE ACID CAN'T SLOP OVER!
BETTER, SUSAN. STILL NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE UP FOR YOUR PAST FAILURES...
BUT A DISTINCT IMPROVE-MENT.
TH-THANK YOU, REED.


ALL RIGHT, NOW BE SILENT, SUSAN.
WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT, SO WE MUST BE AT MAXIMUM READINESS.
FROM HERE ON WE ARE IN A CONDITION OF ABSOLUTE HAZARD!
OH, REED! LOOK AT THOSE BIG SPIKEY THINGS!
WHAT COULD THEY BE FOR?
DON'T YAMMER SO, SUSAN. I'M TRYING TO THINK!
REED!
SUSAN! WHAT DID I JUST TELL...
CHUNG!!
RREEEDDD!!!


OOOHHH...
...REED...
...REED...
...REED...
...REED...
HE... HE'S DEAD!
NOT EVEN REED COULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT!
I'M ALL ALONE! ALL ALONE!
WHAT CAN I DO? HOW CAN I GO ON?
COME ALONG NOW, SUSIE. THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE YOU!
WHO...?
M-MOMMY?
DADDY?
YES, DEAR. IT'S US.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE BRAVE, SUSIE. YOU'VE GOT TO BE STRONG!
WE STORMS HAVE NEVER BEEN QUITTERS, SUSIE.
WE DON'T LET ANYTHING STOP US!

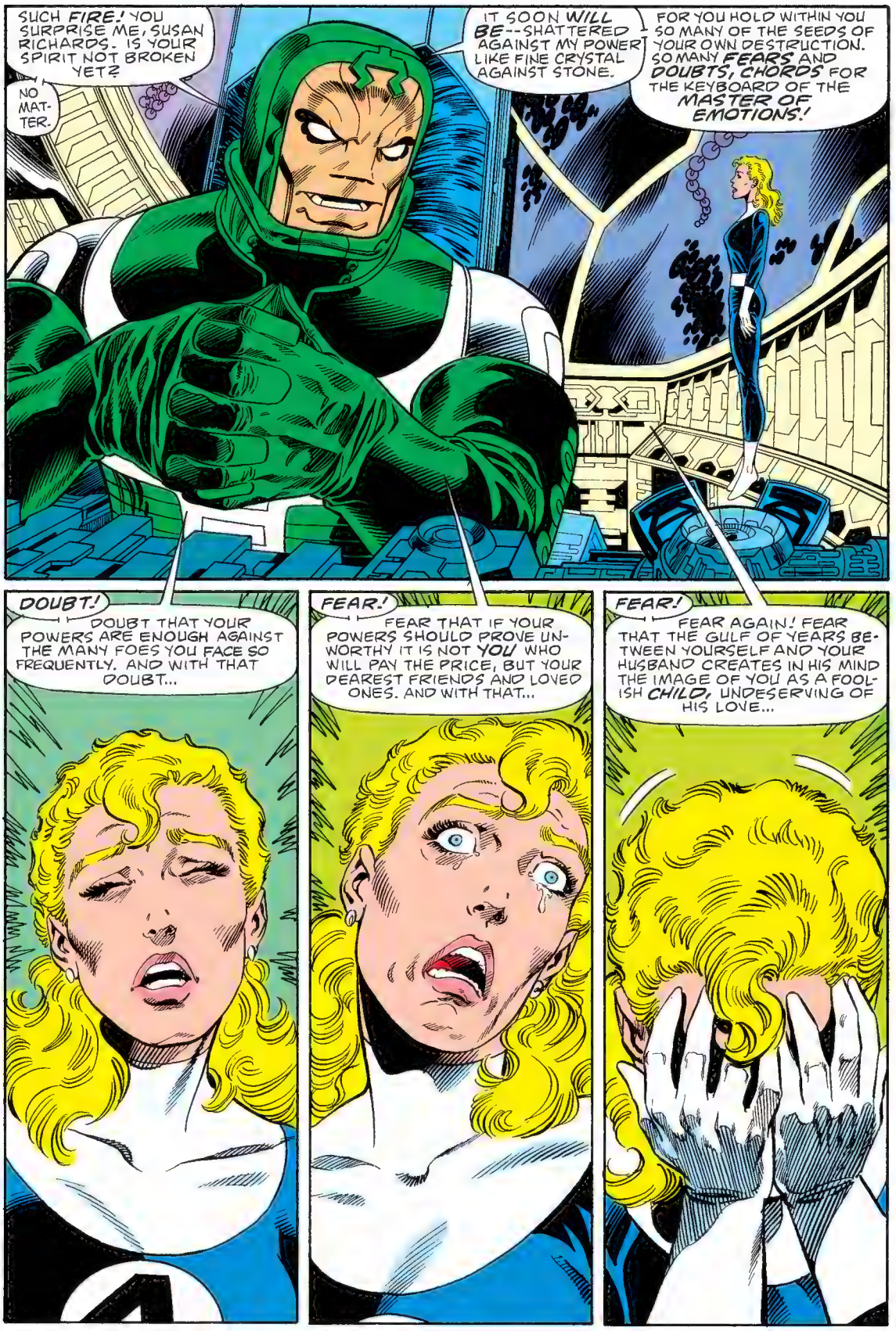
...NOT EVEN DEATH!
NO!
SUSIE, WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
DON'T RUN AWAY FROM US, DEAR!
WE AREN'T GOING TO HURT YOU.
NO!
WE LOVE YOU.
WE LOVE YOU AND WE WANT TO KEEP YOU WITH US...
...FOREVER!
NO!
NO!
NO!

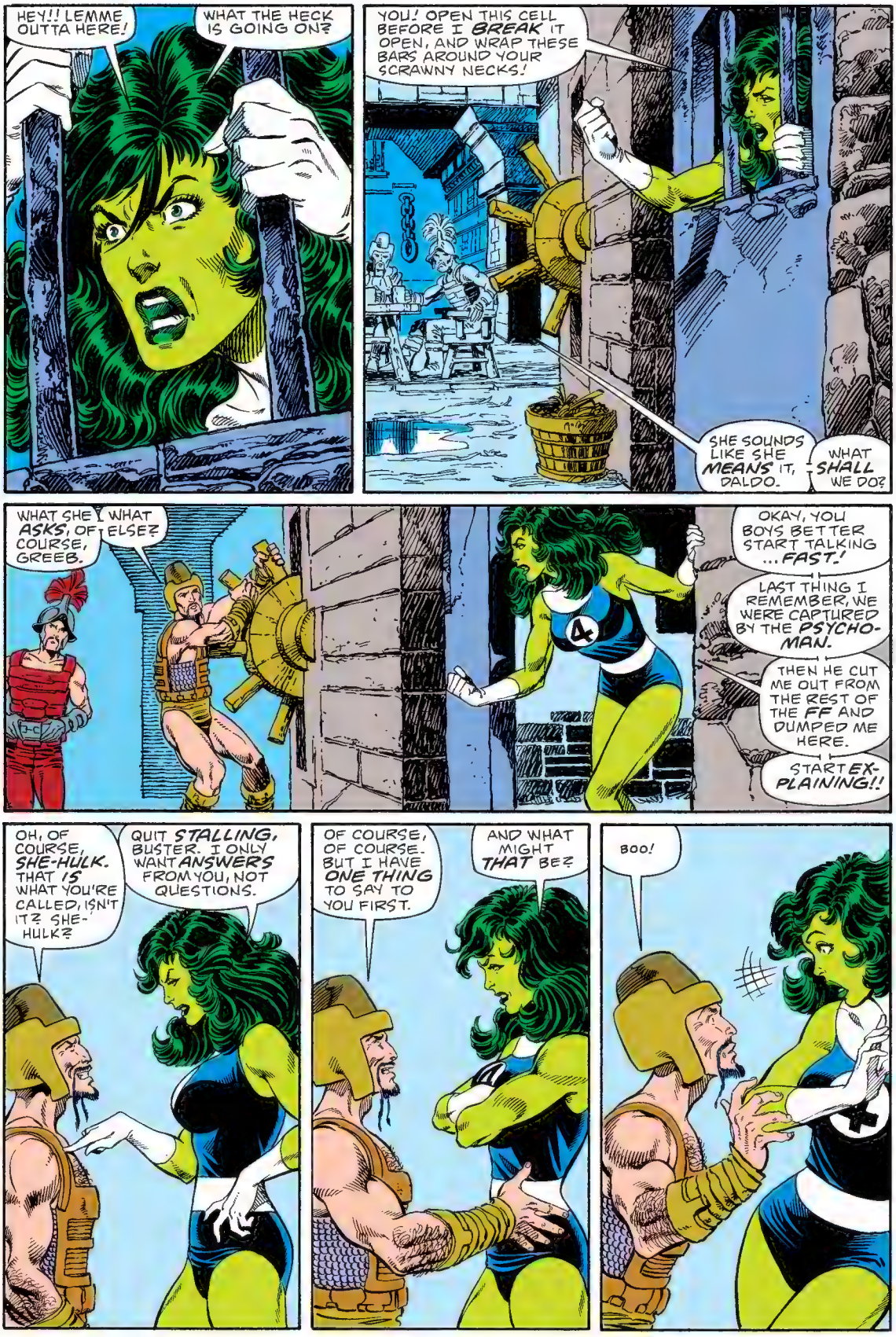

NOOOOOOOO!
EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT! WE END AS WE BEGAN! I DO SO ENJOY A SENSE OF SYMMETRY.
PSYCHO-MAN! YOU CREEP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HER? LET HER GO!!
EASY, TORCH. DON'T WASTE YOUR ENERGY.
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.


WHAT?!?
REED...YOU'RE GIVING UP? I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THAT'S SUE HE'S TORTURING!
MY SISTER! YOUR WIFE!!
AND THESE PRISON TUBES ARE VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE JOHNNY. YOU KNOW THAT. OUR POWERS ARE NO USE AGAINST THEM.
YOU ARE QUITE CORRECT, REED RICHARDS.
YOU MAY HAVE UNHINGED MY PLAN TO DOMINATE YOUR WORLD...
...BUT YOU ARE IN THE MICROVERSE NOW. AND HERE THE PSYCHO-MAN IS LORD AND MASTER OVER ALL!
INCLUDING THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!
"LORD AND MASTER?" THEN I CAN ONLY PITY THE POPULACE RULED BY SO CRUEL AND VENGEFUL A CREATURE AS YOU!
IT IS NOT I WHO AM VENGEFUL, HUMAN. IT IS TRUE I INVADED YOUR DIMENSION, BUT YOU BEAT ME BACK, AND THE MATTER COULD HAVE ENDED THERE.
BUT IT WAS YOU HUMANS WHO CAME SEEKING VENGEANCE.
OR DO YOU DENY THIS EXCHANGE...?
SUE, DARLING...

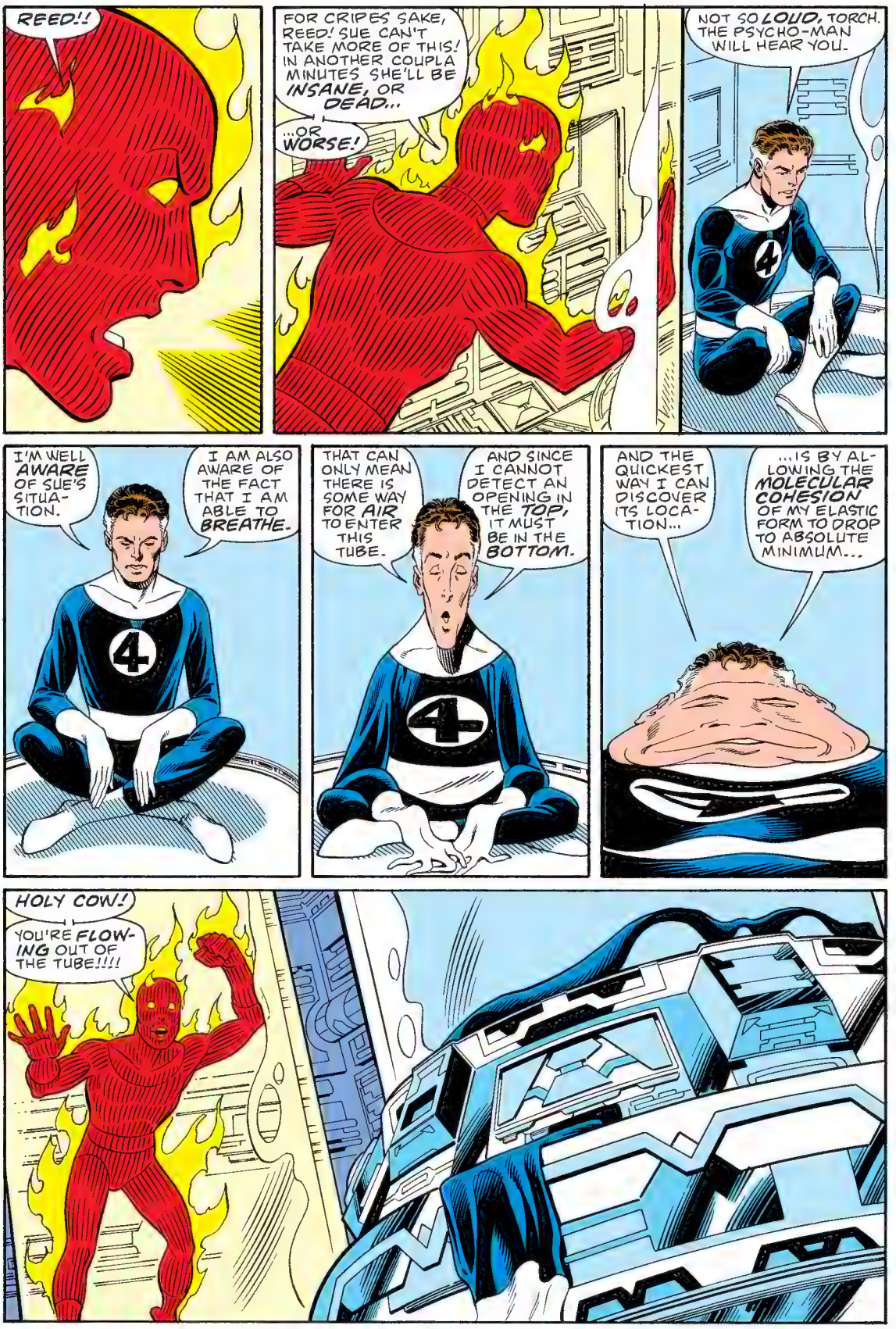
SUE... DARLING...
I... I'M SORRY. I CONFESS I HAD NO IDEA. OF COURSE, THIS MUST TAKE PRIORITY.
YOU MUST HAVE JUSTICE!
NO... NOT JUSTICE. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN JUSTICE, REED.
WHAT I WANT IS VENGEANCE!
Y-YES...
YOU...YOU'VE BEEN MONITORING US! SCANNING OUR ACTIONS ALL ALONG!
OF COURSE.
HOW ELSE DO YOU THINK I WAS ABLE TO BRING ABOUT YOUR PRESENT SITUATION? I HAVE BEEN AWARE OF EVERY MOVE YOU HAVE MADE FOR DAYS NOW.
AND WHEN YOU CAME AFTER ME, SHRINKING DOWN INTO MY MICRO-COSMIC UNIVERSE, IT WAS CHILD'S PLAY FOR ME TO GENERATE A DISRUPTION FIELD AT THE POINT OF DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE.
THUS, INSTEAD OF RETURNING TO YOUR NORMAL SIZE AFTER CROSSING THE EVENT HORIZON, YOU CONTINUED TO SHRINK... LEAVING YOU ALL AT MY MERCY.
BUT ENOUGH CHATTER. IT IS TIME NOW TO CONTINUE MY OWN JUSTICE AGAINST THE INVISIBLE GIRL!
JUSTICE...? WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF JUSTICE, YOU...SOULLESS... MONSTER?
YOU USED YOUR PSYCHO-RAY TO TWIST MY EMOTIONS, MY HEART, TO TURN ME AGAINST MY LOVED ONES...*
IF REED HADN'T FOUND A WAY TO FREE ME, I MIGHT WELL HAVE MURDERED THE REST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
AND YOU DARE PLAY THE INJURED PARTY? YOU DARE PRETEND IT IS YOU WHO HAVE BEEN WRONGED??

*IN FF #S 280-281.


SUCH FIRE! YOU SURPRISE ME, SUSAN RICHARDS. IS YOUR SPIRIT NOT BROKEN YET?
NO MATTER.
IT SOON WILL BE--SHATTERED AGAINST MY POWER LIKE FINE CRYSTAL AGAINST STONE.
FOR YOU HOLD WITHIN YOU SO MANY OF THE SEEDS OF YOUR OWN DESTRUCTION. SO MANY FEARS AND DOUBTS, CHORDS FOR THE KEYBOARD OF THE MASTER OF EMOTIONS!
DOUBT!
DOUBT THAT YOUR POWERS ARE ENOUGH AGAINST THE MANY FOES YOU FACE SO FREQUENTLY. AND WITH THAT DOUBT...
FEAR!
FEAR THAT IF YOUR POWERS SHOULD PROVE UNWORTHY IT IS NOT YOU WHO WILL PAY THE PRICE, BUT YOUR DEAREST FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. AND WITH THAT...
FEAR!
FEAR AGAIN! FEAR THAT THE GULF OF YEARS BETWEEN YOURSELF AND YOUR HUSBAND CREATES IN HIS MIND THE IMAGE OF YOU AS A FOOLISH CHILD, UNDESERVING OF HIS LOVE...


HEY!! LEMME OUTTA HERE!
WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON?
YOU! OPEN THIS CELL BEFORE I BREAK IT OPEN, AND WRAP THESE BARS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECKS!
SHE SOUNDS LIKE SHE MEANS IT, DALDO.
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
WHAT SHE ASKS, OF COURSE, GREEB.
WHAT ELSE?
OKAY, YOU BOYS BETTER START TALKING ...FAST!
LAST THING I REMEMBER, WE WERE CAPTURED BY THE PSYCHO-MAN.
THEN HE CUT ME OUT FROM THE REST OF THE FF AND DUMPED ME HERE.
START EX-PLAINING!!
OH, OF COURSE, SHE-HULK. THAT IS WHAT YOU'RE CALLED, ISN'T IT? SHE-HULK?
QUIT STALLING, BUSTER. I ONLY WANT ANSWERS FROM YOU, NOT QUESTIONS.
OF COURSE, OF COURSE. BUT I HAVE ONE THING TO SAY TO YOU FIRST.
AND WHAT MIGHT THAT BE?
BOO!

BOO! BOO! BOOO!!
NO...
...D-DON'T...
WHERE IS YOUR GREAT POWER NOW, SHE-HULK? YOUR SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH?
WHERE?
...N-NOOO...
...PLEASE...
...DON'T...
HAHAHAHAHAHA! TRULY WONDROUS TO BEHOLD, DALDO!
THE POWER OF THE GREAT ONE IS UN-DIMMED!
YOU SPEAK TRUTH, GREEB. IT HAS BEEN HOURS SINCE THE GREAT ONE EXPOSED THE SHE-HULK TO HIS FEAR-RAY, YET THE EFFECT IS STILL STRONG.
SHE WILL BE PERFECT FODDER FOR THE MINES OF NUVIDIA!
...NO...
...NO...
...PLEASE...


REED!!
FOR CRIPES SAKE, REED! SUE CAN'T TAKE MORE OF THIS! IN ANOTHER COUPLA MINUTES SHE'LL BE INSANE, OR DEAD...
...OR WORSE!
NOT SO LOUD, TORCH. THE PSYCHO-MAN WILL HEAR YOU.
I'M WELL AWARE OF SUE'S SITUATION.
I AM ALSO AWARE OF THE FACT THAT I AM ABLE TO BREATHE.
THAT CAN ONLY MEAN THERE IS SOME WAY FOR AIR TO ENTER THIS TUBE.
AND SINCE I CANNOT DETECT AN OPENING IN THE TOP, IT MUST BE IN THE BOTTOM.
AND THE QUICKEST WAY I CAN DISCOVER ITS LOCATION...
...IS BY ALLOWING THE MOLECULAR COHESION OF MY ELASTIC FORM TO DROP TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM...
HOLY COW!
YOU'RE FLOWING OUT OF THE TUBE!!!!

WHAT...?!
ALL RIGHT, PSYCHO-MAN, WE'RE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON THIS GAME OF YOURS UNDER A NEW SET OF RULES...
...MINE!
NO! NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!? STOP IT!! STOP IT AT ONCE...
...OR YOUR WIFE PAYS THE ULTI-MATE PENALTY!!
GNAHHGH!

HANG ON, DARLING! HANG ON!!
YOU'LL BE FREE SOON!
I'VE FIGURED OUT THE PSYCHO-MAN'S SCHEME!
NO! YOU CANNOT HAVE!
YOU CAN-NOT!!
OH, BUT I HAVE, PSYCHO-MAN. ONCE I TOOK A MOMENT TO THINK, IT WAS OBVIOUS!
AND NOW IT'S ENDED!!
NO!!

AND NOW, YOU CAN COME OUT OF THERE, PSYCHO-MAN. YOUR GAME IS FINISHED!
NO! NO! THIS CANNOT BE HAPPENING.
FACE FACTS, MY FRIEND. BY NOW YOU SHOULD KNOW YOU HAVE LITTLE HOPE OF VICTORY WHEN YOU GO UP AGAINST THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
OKAY, JOHNNY, OUT YOU COME.
THANKS, FEARLESS LEADER.
AND YOU, TOO, SUSAN. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I...I THINK SO. AS ALL RIGHT AS I'LL EVER BE.
REED, HOW DID YOU GUESS? HOW DID YOU SEE THROUGH THE PSYCHO-MAN'S LIES?
THE PSYCHO-MAN HAS A VAST TECHNOLOGY AT HIS COMMAND, DARLING, BUT HE HAS TRADITIONALLY USED IT TO ONLY ONE END: TO MANIPULATE EMOTIONS. EVERYTHING HE DOES IS DESIGNED TO CREATE CONFLICTING, CONFUSING EMOTIONAL STIMULI FOR HIS INTENDED VICTIMS.
BUT HE WENT TOO FAR WHEN HE TRIED TO FOOL ME WITH HIS TALK OF A "DISRUPTION FIELD" ACCROSS THE DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE. THE INTERFACE IS NOT A SINGLE, SPECIFIC POINT, BUT A CONSTANTLY SHIFTING ZONE OF POTENTIALITY.
TO SAY HE HAD CREATED A FIELD ACROSS THE INTERFACE WAS LIKE SAYING ONE COULD STOP AN AIRCRAFT IN HIGH-ALTITUDE FLIGHT BY BUILDING A CONVENTIONAL BRICK WALL ON THE GROUND ACROSS ITS FLIGHT-PATH.
REALIZING THE BASIC FALSEHOOD, I THEN SAW THAT HIS COSTUME WAS DESIGNED ALONG THE LINES OF THE GIANT EXO-SUIT HE WORE WHEN WE FIRST BATTLED HIM, YEARS AGO.
I GUESSED THEN THAT WE WERE NOT SHRUNKEN, BUT WERE IN FACT ON AN OVERSIZED "SET" THE PSYCHO-MAN HAD CONSTRUCTED TO ADD TO OUR CONFUSION AND DISORIENTATION.
THEN...HE WAS UNDONE BY HIS OWN DECEPTIONS! THANK GOD YOU WERE ABLE TO PENETRATE THEM, REED.
ALL THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST TOO MUCH FOR ME ALONE, OR JOHNNY OR...OR...
OH, MY SWEET...
REED! WHERE'S JENNIFER?

"WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE SHE-HULK?!?"
KEEP MOVING, SLAVE! NO REST FOR YOU! YOU WORK UNTIL YOU DIE!!
NEXT ISSUE: THE PSYCHO-MAN IS DOWN, BUT IS HE OUT? DON'T PUT ANY MONEY ON IT. NOT UNTIL YOU'VE READ..
REVOLUTION!
FEATURING THE LAST APPEARANCE OF THE INVISIBLE GIRL!
DON'T MISS IT!

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STAN LEE PRESENTS
REVOLUTION!
"Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom."
BERTRAND RUSSELL
(1872-1970)
JOHN BYRNE
ARTIST/WRITER
JOHN WORKMAN
LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER
COLORIST
MICHAEL CARLIN
EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF
AND WELCOME BACK TO
AL GORDON
INKER

NOW, GARBA! THROW NOW!!

DON'T *JOSTLE* ME, KAMAR! IF I MISS THIS SHOT, IT'LL BE *DAYS* BEFORE WE EAT AGAIN!

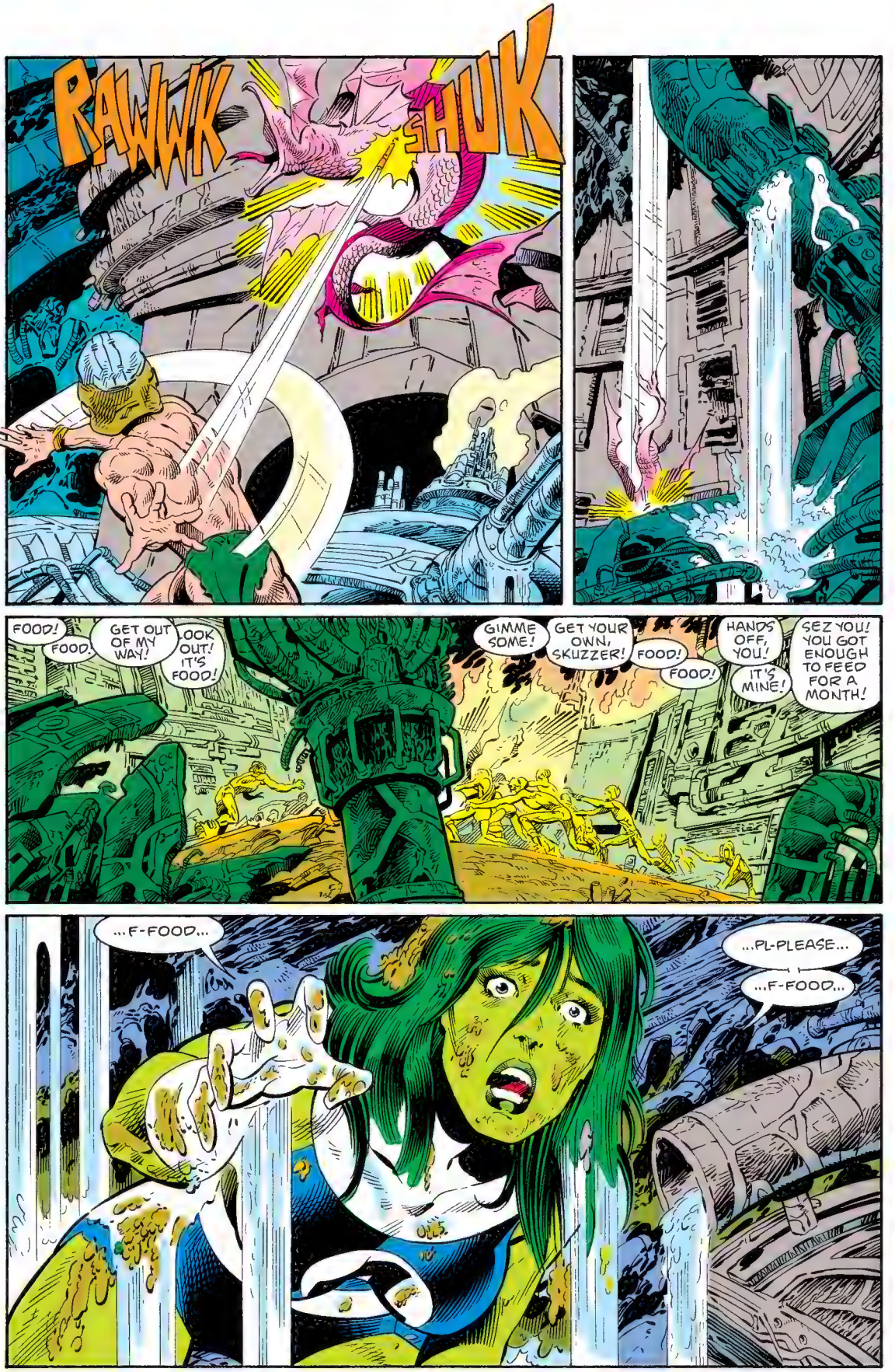
...F-FOOD...?

CONCENTRATE ON THE *JOB* AT *HAND*, SLAVE!

HOLD UP THAT BRIDGE!

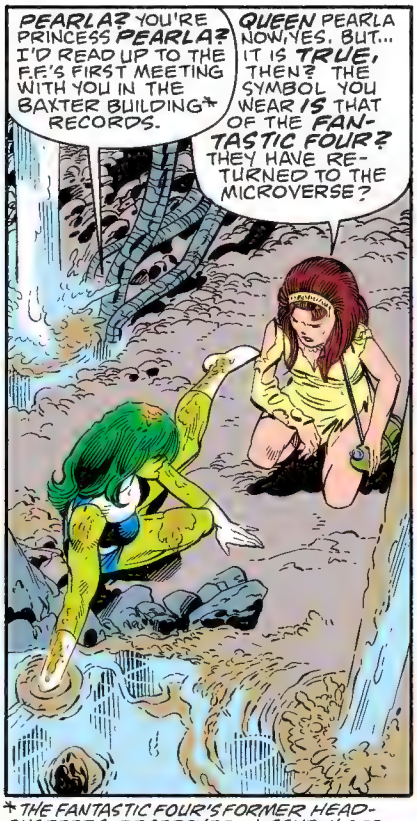
IF SO MUCH AS A *PEBBLE* FALLS FROM THE HAULER, I'LL TAKE IT OUT OF YOUR *HIDE* A HUNDRED-FOLD!

LOOK! IT'S A BLIND WIND-CRAWLER! IT MUST HAVE COME UP FROM THE LOWER LEVELS!

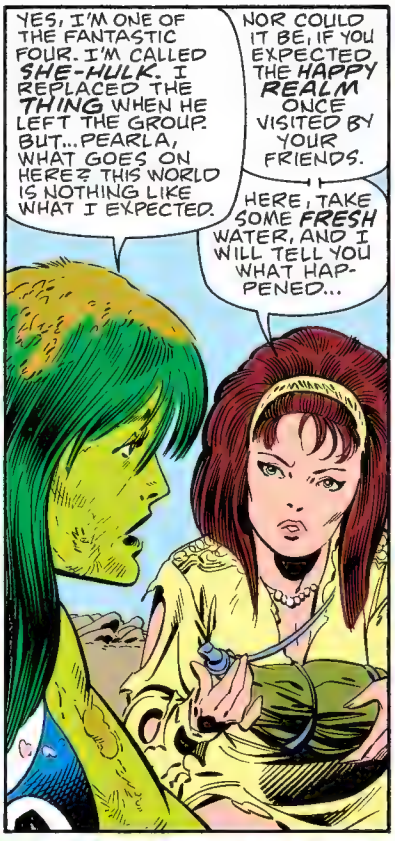

RAWWK
SHUK
FOOD!
FOOD.
GET OUT OF MY WAY!
OOK OUT! IT'S FOOD!
GIMME SOME!
GET YOUR OWN, SKUZZER!
FOOD!
FOOD!
HANDS OFF, YOU!
IT'S MINE!
SEZ YOU! YOU GOT ENOUGH TO FEED FOR A MONTH!
...F-FOOD...
...PL-PLEASE...
...F-FOOD...

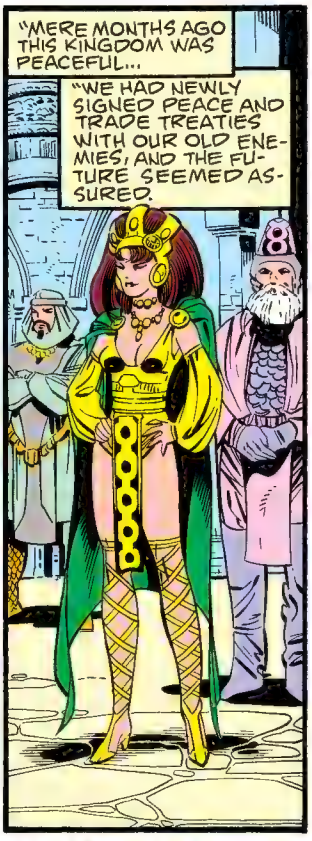
...P-PLEASE...
UNGH!
WHUD
YOU DON'T LISTEN VERY WELL, DO YOU, SLAVE?
NOW, WORK!!
PLEASE... MUST HAVE... FOOD...
...WATER...
...PLEASE...
SO IT'S WATER YOU WANT, IS IT, SLAVE?
VERY WELL THEN.
WATER YOU SHALL HAVE!
NO!
Gulg!
Gag!

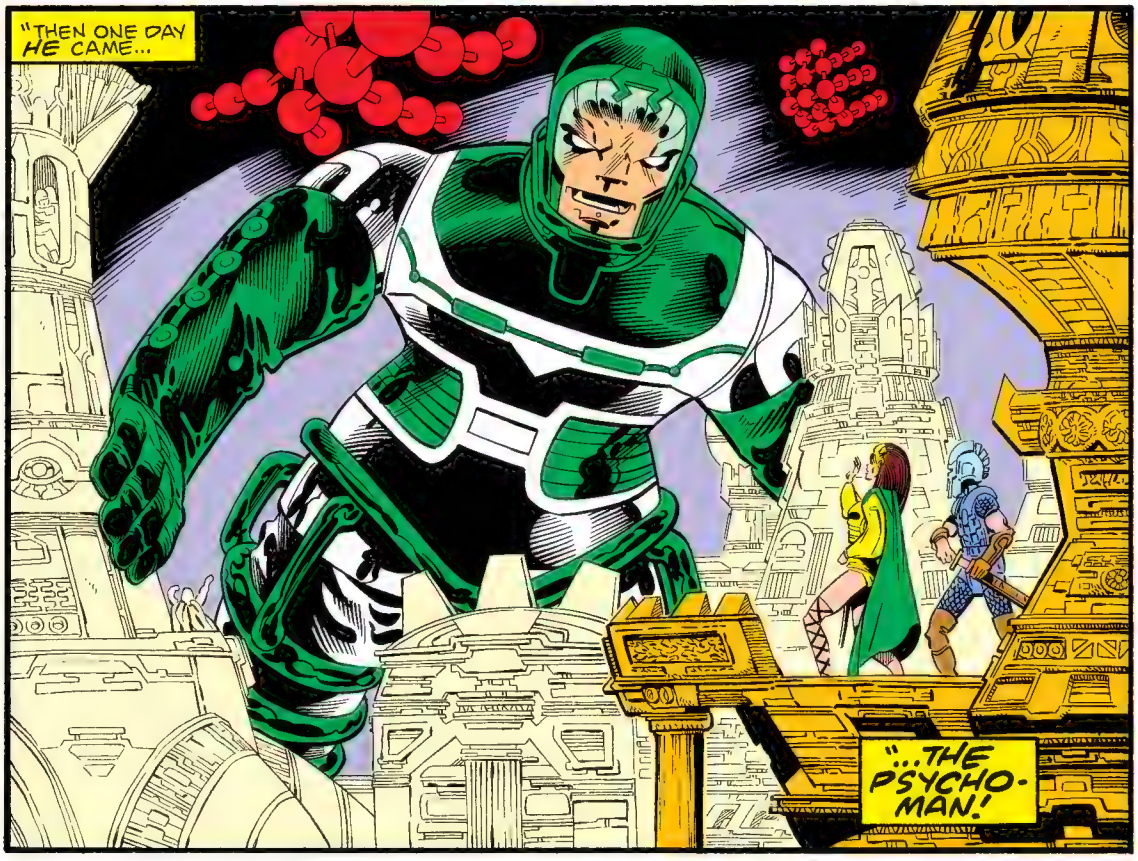
NOW, GET BACK TO WORK BEFORE I...
DUTTA! LEAVE THE GREEN ONE. YOU'RE WANTED ON LEVEL NINE.
Huh! IT SEEMS YOU'RE TO GET A SHORT REST AFTER ALL, SLAVE.
BUT I'M COMING BACK JUST AS SOON AS I CAN.
AND THEN I'LL WORK YOU TWICE AS HARD!!
HAW HAW HAW HAW!
Koff
Koff
Koff
WHAT...?!?
WHO IS IT?!?
DON'T...
Shhh! BE STILL, GIANTESS.
I AM A FRIEND.
A... FRIEND? DOWN HERE? WHO... WHO ARE YOU?
I AM CALLED PEARLA. NOT LONG AGO I RULED THE LANDS ABOVE THIS DARK PLACE.

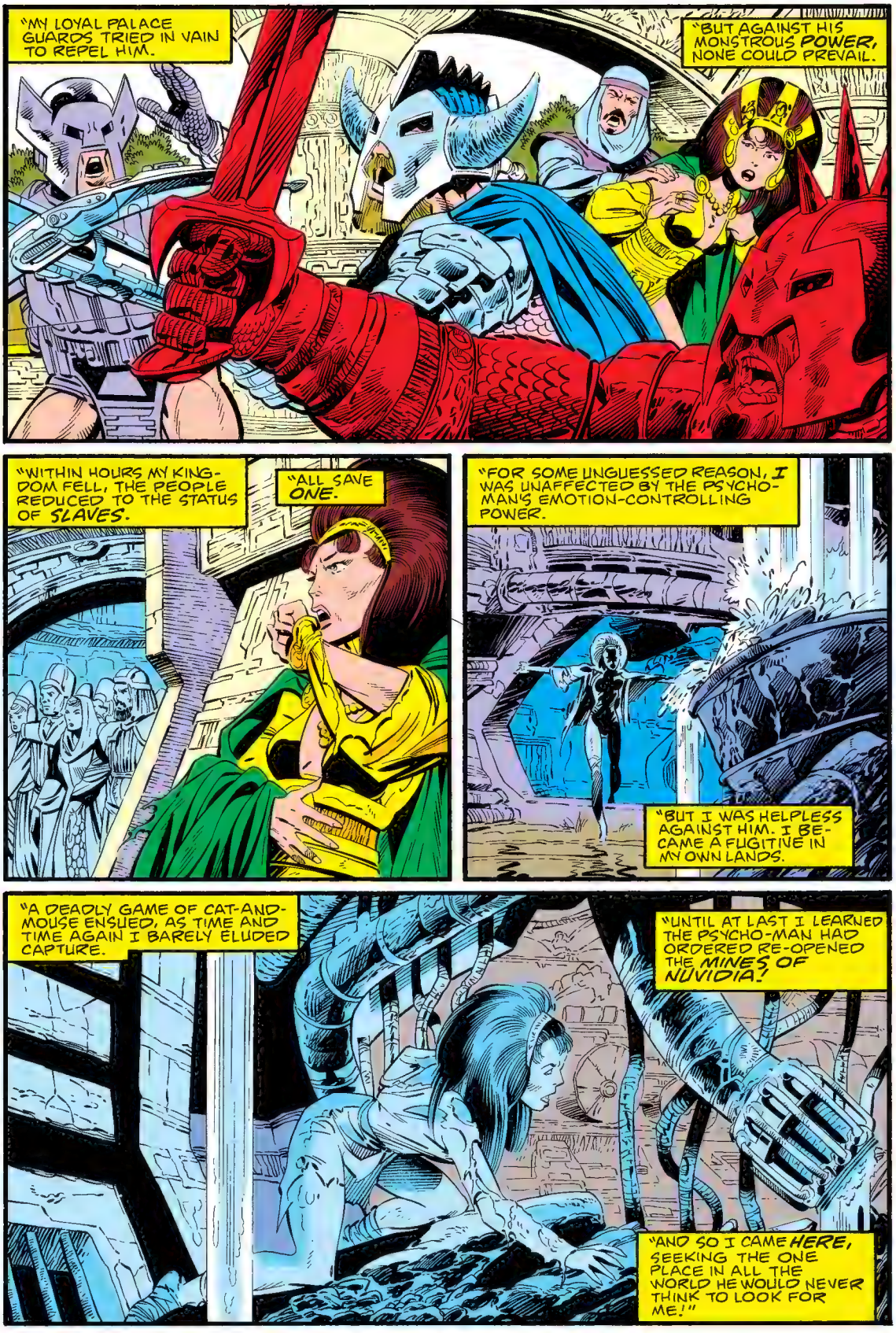

PEARLA? YOU'RE PRINCESS PEARLA? I'D READ UP TO THE F.F.'S FIRST MEETING WITH YOU IN THE BAXTER BUILDING* RECORDS.
QUEEN PEARLA NOW, YES. BUT... IT IS TRUE, THEN? THE SYMBOL YOU WEAR IS THAT OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR? THEY HAVE RETURNED TO THE MICROVERSE?

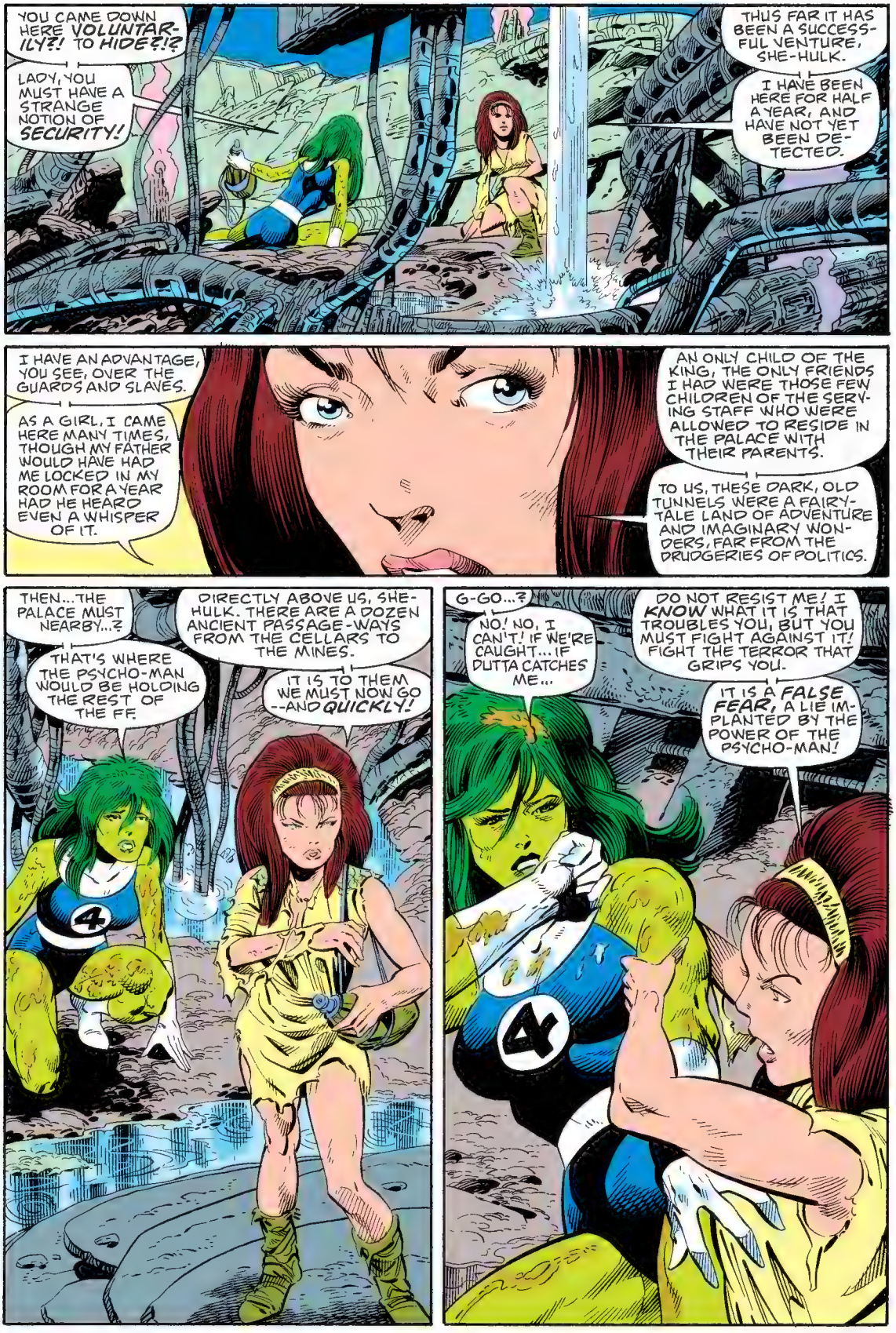
*THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S FORMER HEADQUARTERS, DESTROYED IN ISSUE #278.


YES, I'M ONE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR. I'M CALLED SHE-HULK. I REPLACED THE THING WHEN HE LEFT THE GROUP. BUT... PEARLA, WHAT GOES ON HERE? THIS WORLD IS NOTHING LIKE WHAT I EXPECTED.
NOR COULD IT BE, IF YOU EXPECTED THE HAPPY REALM ONCE VISITED BY YOUR FRIENDS.
HERE, TAKE SOME FRESH WATER, AND I WILL TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED...


"MERE MONTHS AGO THIS KINGDOM WAS PEACEFUL...
"WE HAD NEWLY SIGNED PEACE AND TRADE TREATIES WITH OUR OLD ENEMIES, AND THE FUTURE SEEMED ASSURED.




"MY LOYAL PALACE GUARDS TRIED IN VAIN TO REPEL HIM.
"BUT AGAINST HIS MONSTROUS POWER, NONE COULD PREVAIL.
"WITHIN HOURS MY KINGDOM FELL, THE PEOPLE REDUCED TO THE STATUS OF SLAVES.
"ALL SAVE ONE.
"FOR SOME UNGUESSED REASON, I WAS UNAFFECTED BY THE PSYCHO-MAN'S EMOTION-CONTROLLING POWER.
"BUT I WAS HELPLESS AGAINST HIM. I BECAME A FUGITIVE IN MY OWN LANDS.
"A DEADLY GAME OF CAT-AND-MOUSE ENSUED, AS TIME AND TIME AGAIN I BARELY ELUDED CAPTURE.
"UNTIL AT LAST I LEARNED THE PSYCHO-MAN HAD ORDERED RE-OPENED THE MINES OF NUVIDIA!
"AND SO I CAME HERE, SEEKING THE ONE PLACE IN ALL THE WORLD HE WOULD NEVER THINK TO LOOK FOR ME!"

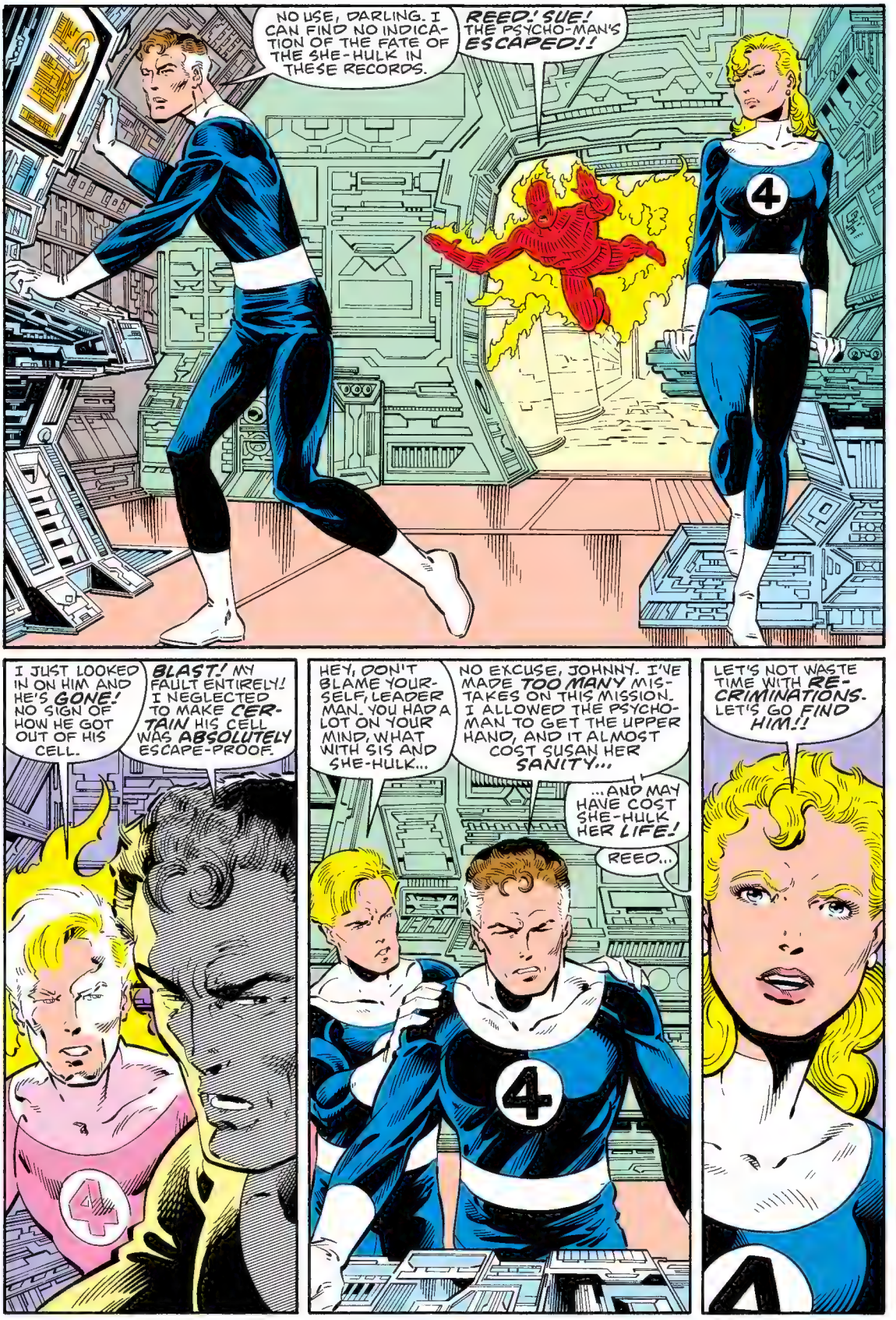

YOU CAME DOWN HERE VOLUNTARILY?! TO HIDE?!?
LADY, YOU MUST HAVE A STRANGE NOTION OF SECURITY!
THUS FAR IT HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL VENTURE, SHE-HULK.
I HAVE BEEN HERE FOR HALF A YEAR, AND HAVE NOT YET BEEN DETECTED.
I HAVE AN ADVANTAGE, YOU SEE, OVER THE GUARDS AND SLAVES.
AS A GIRL, I CAME HERE MANY TIMES, THOUGH MY FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD ME LOCKED IN MY ROOM FOR A YEAR HAD HE HEARD EVEN A WHISPER OF IT.
AN ONLY CHILD OF THE KING, THE ONLY FRIENDS I HAD WERE THOSE FEW CHILDREN OF THE SERVING STAFF WHO WERE ALLOWED TO RESIDE IN THE PALACE WITH THEIR PARENTS.
TO US, THESE DARK, OLD TUNNELS WERE A FAIRY-TALE LAND OF ADVENTURE AND IMAGINARY WONDERS, FAR FROM THE DRUDGERIES OF POLITICS.
THEN...THE PALACE MUST NEARBY...?
THAT'S WHERE THE PSYCHO-MAN WOULD BE HOLDING THE REST OF THE FF.
DIRECTLY ABOVE US, SHE-HULK. THERE ARE A DOZEN ANCIENT PASSAGE-WAYS FROM THE CELLARS TO THE MINES.
IT IS TO THEM WE MUST NOW GO --AND QUICKLY!
G-GO...?
NO! NO, I CAN'T! IF WE'RE CAUGHT... IF DUTTA CATCHES ME...
DO NOT RESIST ME! I KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT TROUBLES YOU, BUT YOU MUST FIGHT AGAINST IT! FIGHT THE TERROR THAT GRIPS YOU.
IT IS A FALSE FEAR, A LIE IMPLANTED BY THE POWER OF THE PSYCHO-MAN!

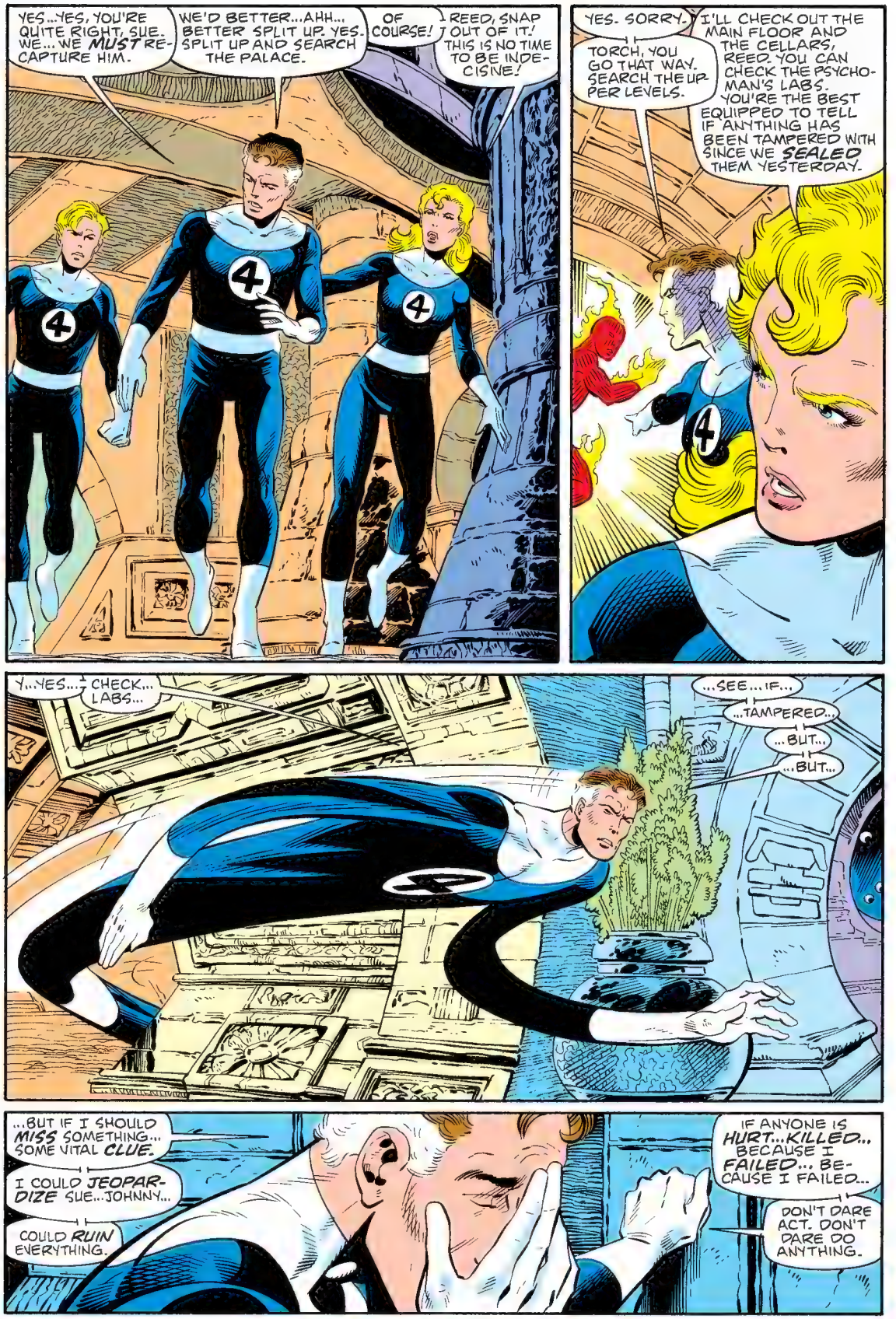
COME QUICKLY NOW BEFORE...
AHHGH!
PEARLA!
PEARLA, IS IT? WELL, WELL, WELL!
THERE'LL BE A CAPTAINCY FOR THIS SOLDIER WHEN THE GREAT ONE LEARNS WHAT I HAVE CAUGHT HIM!
DUTTA!
GOOD DAY TO YOU, YOUR MAJESTY! FORGIVE ME IF I DO NOT BOW, BUT WE HAVE DIFFERENT CUSTOMS IN THIS PLACE.
VERY DIFFERENT!
AHHGHH!
STOP! YOU'LL KILL HER!

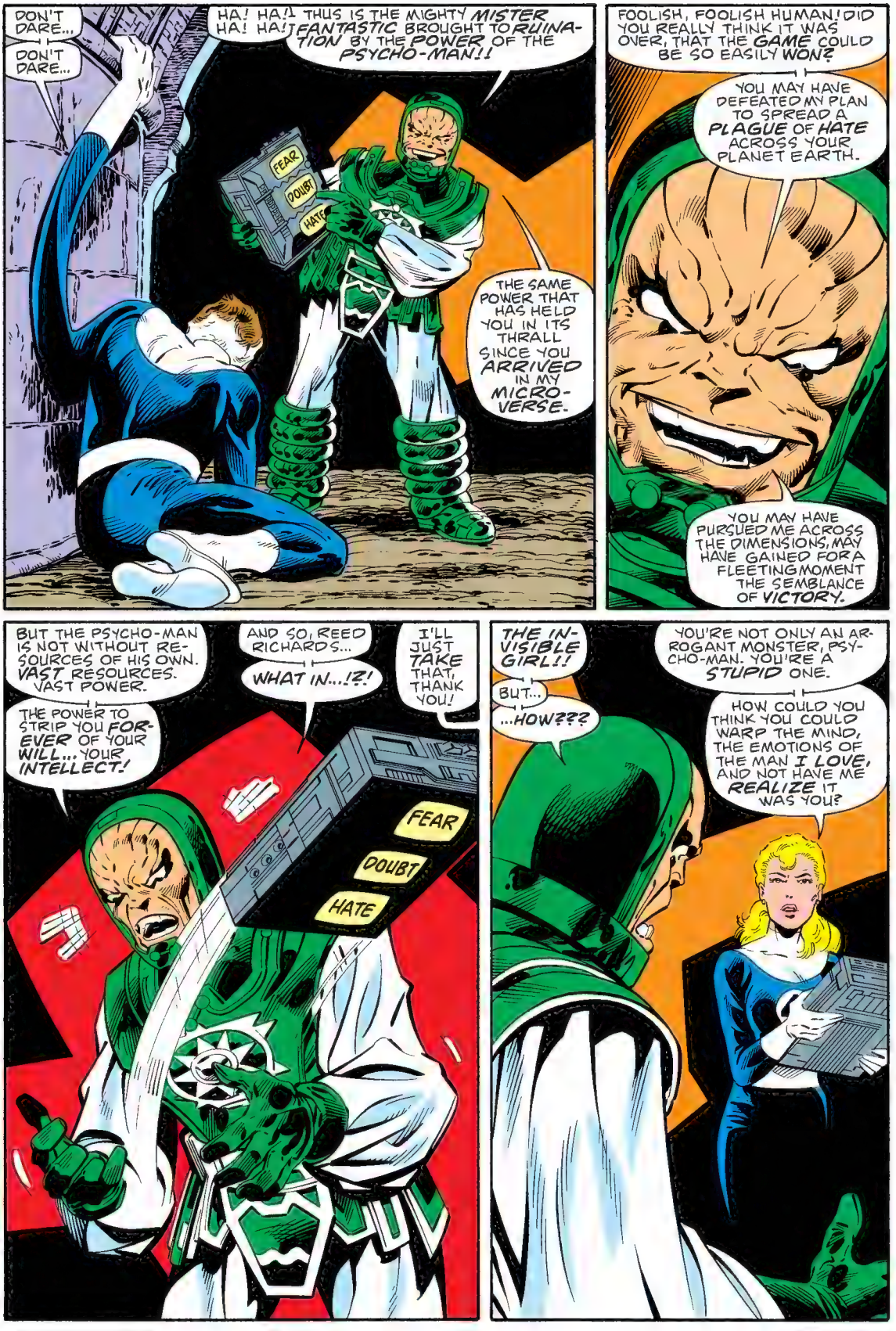
WHAT'S THIS? REBELLION, GREEN ONE? IS OUTTA GOING TO HAVE TO PUNISH YOU?
...M-MO...
HAW HAW HAW!!! ALL HAIL TO THE GREAT ONE!!
BEFORE HE CAME, I WAS ROTTING IN THE QUEEN'S PRISONS. NOW I AM THE MASTER!
DON'T HURT ME. PLEASE DON'T HURT ME AGAIN...
SHE-HULK... LISTEN TO ME... Eh?
YOU MUST FIGHT YOUR FEAR, SHE-HULK. YOU MUST! YOU ARE ONE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR! YOU MUST HAVE GREAT STRENGTH--GREAT COURAGE!
FIGHT, SHE-HULK! FIGHT! REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE. WHAT YOU ARE. YOU MUST!!

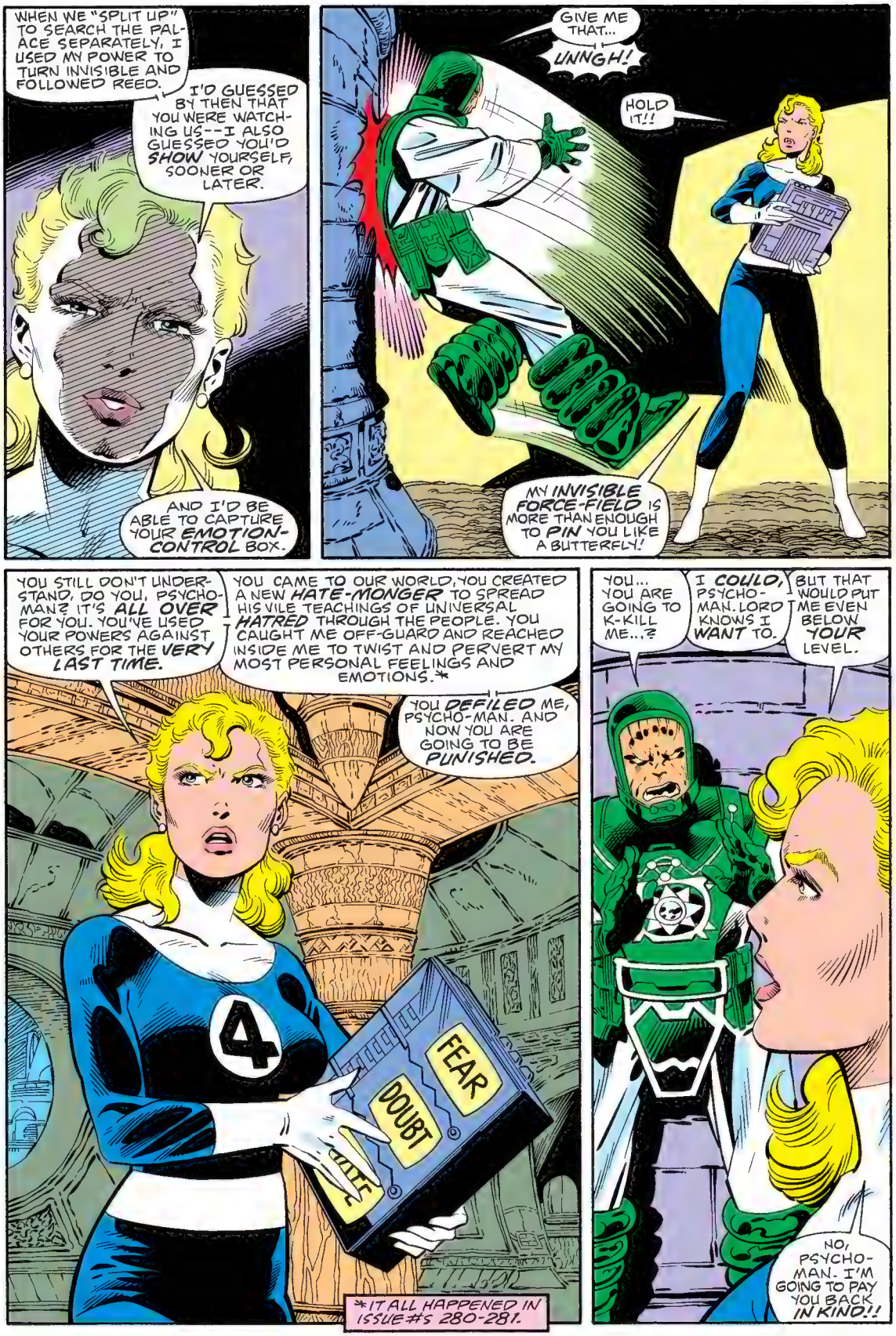
HAW, HAW!
YOU ARE A FOOL, QUEEN.
YOU PUT OUR HOPES IN THAT GARBAGE?
LET DUTTA SHOW YOU HOW FOOLISH YOU ARE.
UUNGH!
COME ON NOW, YOUR MAJESTY! BE NICE TO DUTTA...
...AND DUTTA WILL BE NICE TO YOU!
YES?
NEVER!
I... WOULD ...SOONER ...DIE!
YOU WILL DO THAT ANYWAY, MAJESTY...
DUTTA...
TAP TAP
HUNH...?
SHUT UP!
10/10

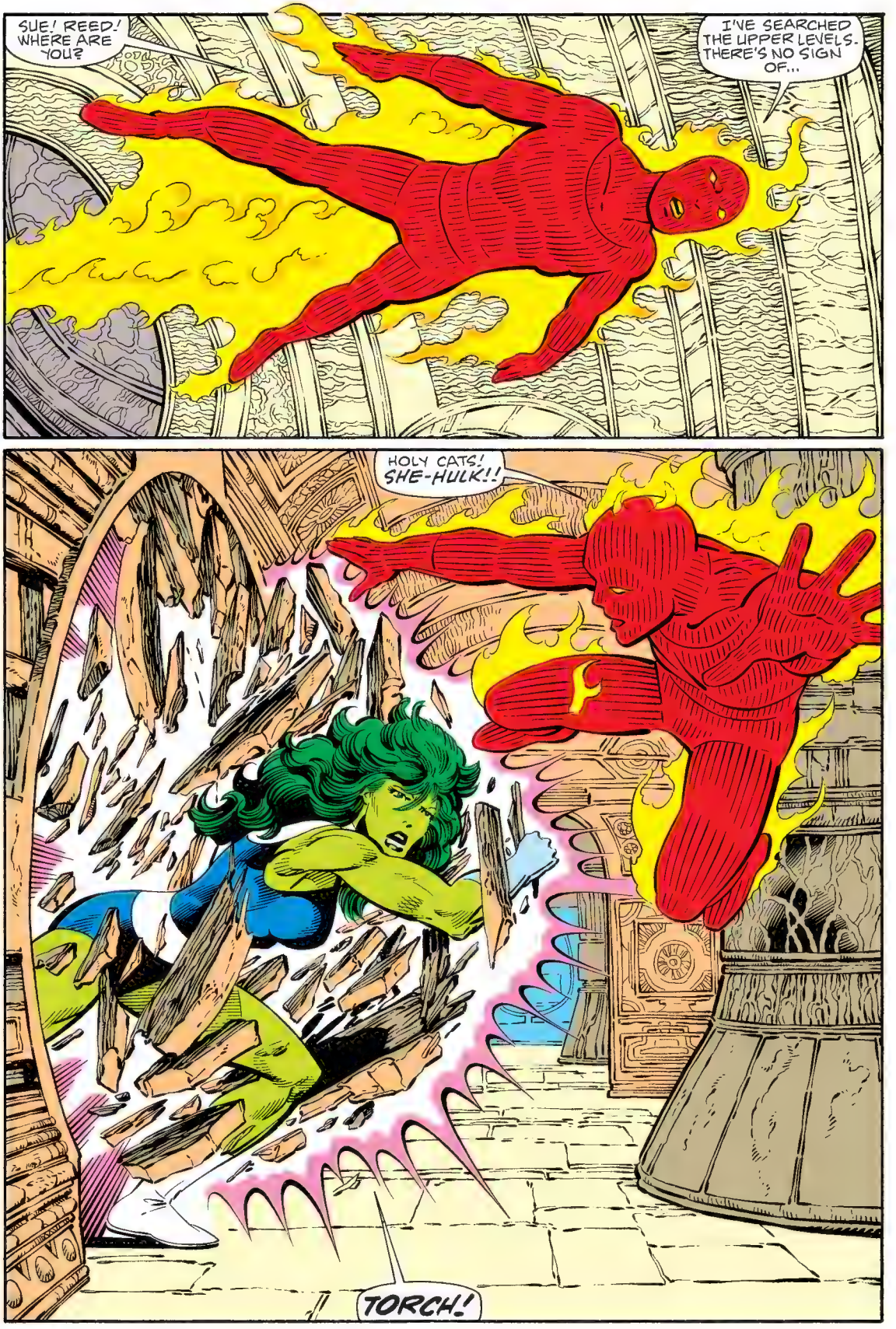
THAT...SHE-HULK, THAT WAS MAG-NIFICENT!
WELL...TO COIN A PHRASE, PEARLA, YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET!
HOW ARE YOU DOING? IF I REMEMBER MY BASIC FIRST AID, WE'LL DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD IF WE PULL OUT THAT SPEAR.
BETTER BREAK OFF THE SHAFT, THOUGH.
THERE...NOW YOU CAN TELL ME HOW TO GET US UP TO THE PALACE.
GLADLY, SHE-HULK...
BUT I SUSPECT THAT WILL NOT BE SO EASY, NOW...
DON'T SWEAT IT, YOUR HIGH-NESS. I'VE BEEN FOUR DAYS IN THIS SLIME-PIT BREAKING MY BACK FOR THIS CREW.
IT'LL BE MY PLEA-SURE TO BREAK A FEW HEADS INSTEAD...


NO USE, DARLING. I CAN FIND NO INDICATION OF THE FATE OF THE SHE-HULK IN THESE RECORDS.
REED! SUE! THE PSYCHO-MAN'S ESCAPED!!
I JUST LOOKED IN ON HIM AND HE'S GONE! NO SIGN OF HOW HE GOT OUT OF HIS CELL.
BLAST! MY FAULT ENTIRELY! I NEGLECTED TO MAKE CERTAIN HIS CELL WAS ABSOLUTELY ESCAPE-PROOF.
HEY, DON'T BLAME YOURSELF, LEADER MAN. YOU HAD A LOT ON YOUR MIND, WHAT WITH SIS AND SHE-HULK...
NO EXCUSE, JOHNNY. I'VE MADE TOO MANY MISTAKES ON THIS MISSION. I ALLOWED THE PSYCHO-MAN TO GET THE UPPER HAND, AND IT ALMOST COST SUSAN HER SANITY...
...AND MAY HAVE COST SHE-HULK HER LIFE!
REED...
LET'S NOT WASTE TIME WITH RECRIMINATIONS. LET'S GO FIND HIM!!


YES...YES, YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, SUE. WE... WE MUST RE-CAPTURE HIM.
WE'D BETTER...AHH... BETTER SPLIT UP. YES. SPLIT UP AND SEARCH THE PALACE.
OF COURSE!
REED, SNAP OUT OF IT! THIS IS NO TIME TO BE INDE-CISIVE!
YES. SORRY.
TORCH, YOU GO THAT WAY. SEARCH THE UP-PER LEVELS.
I'LL CHECK OUT THE MAIN FLOOR AND THE CELLARS, REED. YOU CAN CHECK THE PSYCHO-MAN'S LABS. YOU'RE THE BEST EQUIPPED TO TELL IF ANYTHING HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH SINCE WE SEALED THEM YESTERDAY.
Y...YES...I CHECK... LABS...
...SEE...IF... ...TAMPERED... ...BUT... ...BUT...
...BUT IF I SHOULD MISS SOMETHING... SOME VITAL CLUE.
I COULD JEOPAR-DIZE SUE...JOHNNY...
COULD RUIN EVERYTHING.
IF ANYONE IS HURT...KILLED... BECAUSE I FAILED... BE-CAUSE I FAILED...
DON'T DARE ACT. DON'T DARE DO ANYTHING.

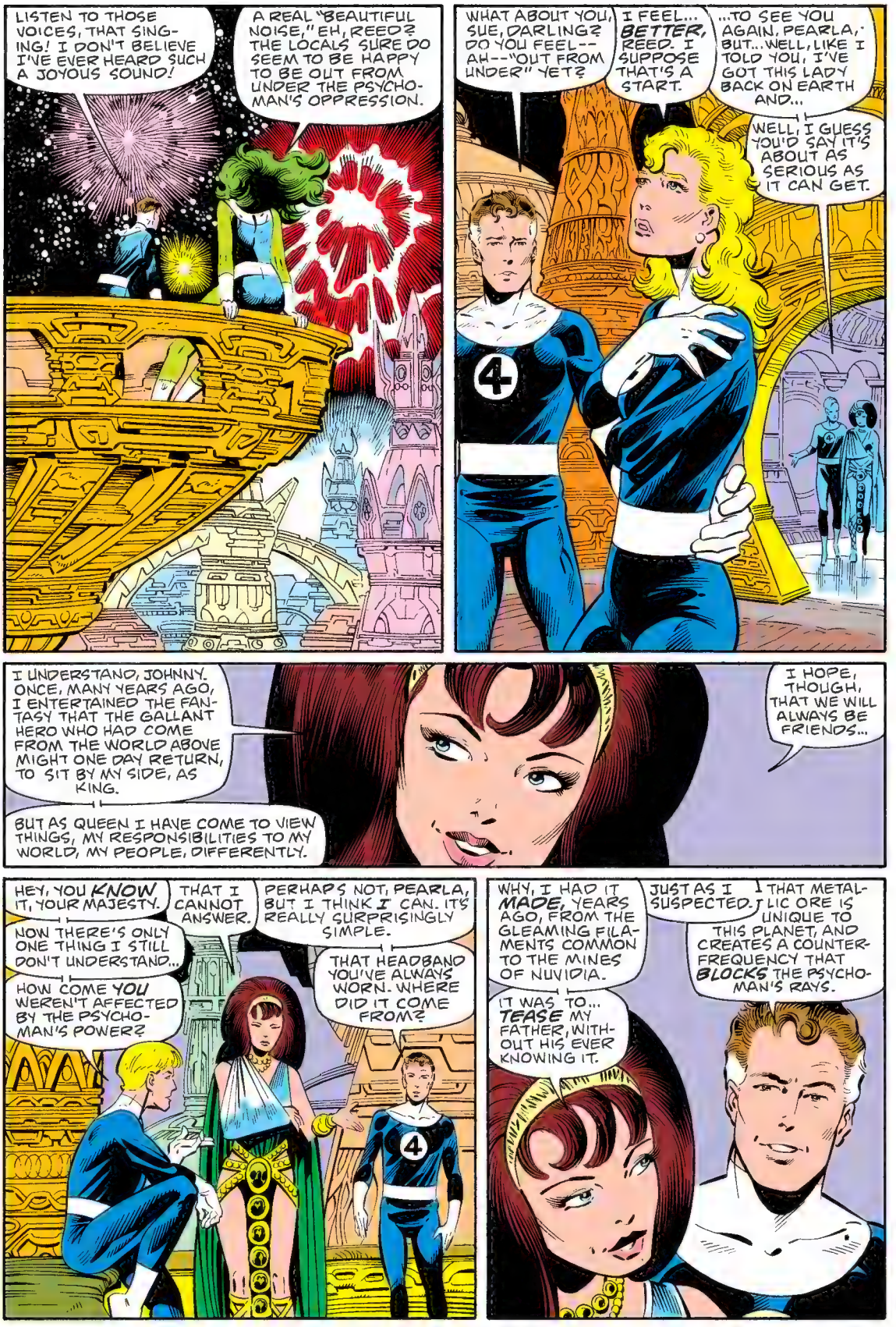

DON'T DARE...
DON'T DARE...
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! THUS IS THE MIGHTY MISTER FANTASTIC BROUGHT TO RUINATION BY THE POWER OF THE PSYCHO-MAN!!
FEAR
DOUBT
HATE
THE SAME POWER THAT HAS HELD YOU IN ITS THRALL SINCE YOU ARRIVED IN MY MICRO-VERSE.
FOOLISH, FOOLISH HUMAN! DID YOU REALLY THINK IT WAS OVER, THAT THE GAME COULD BE SO EASILY WON?
YOU MAY HAVE DEFEATED MY PLAN TO SPREAD A PLAGUE OF HATE ACROSS YOUR PLANET EARTH.
YOU MAY HAVE PURSUED ME ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS, MAY HAVE GAINED FOR A FLEETING MOMENT THE SEMBLANCE OF VICTORY.
BUT THE PSYCHO-MAN IS NOT WITHOUT RESOURCES OF HIS OWN. VAST RESOURCES. VAST POWER.
THE POWER TO STRIP YOU FOREVER OF YOUR WILL... YOUR INTELLECT!
AND SO, REED RICHARDS...
WHAT IN...!?!
I'LL JUST TAKE THAT, THANK YOU!
FEAR
DOUBT
HATE
THE INVISIBLE GIRL!!
BUT...
...HOW???
YOU'RE NOT ONLY AN ARROGANT MONSTER, PSYCHO-MAN. YOU'RE A STUPID ONE.
HOW COULD YOU THINK YOU COULD WARP THE MIND, THE EMOTIONS OF THE MAN I LOVE, AND NOT HAVE ME REALIZE IT WAS YOU?

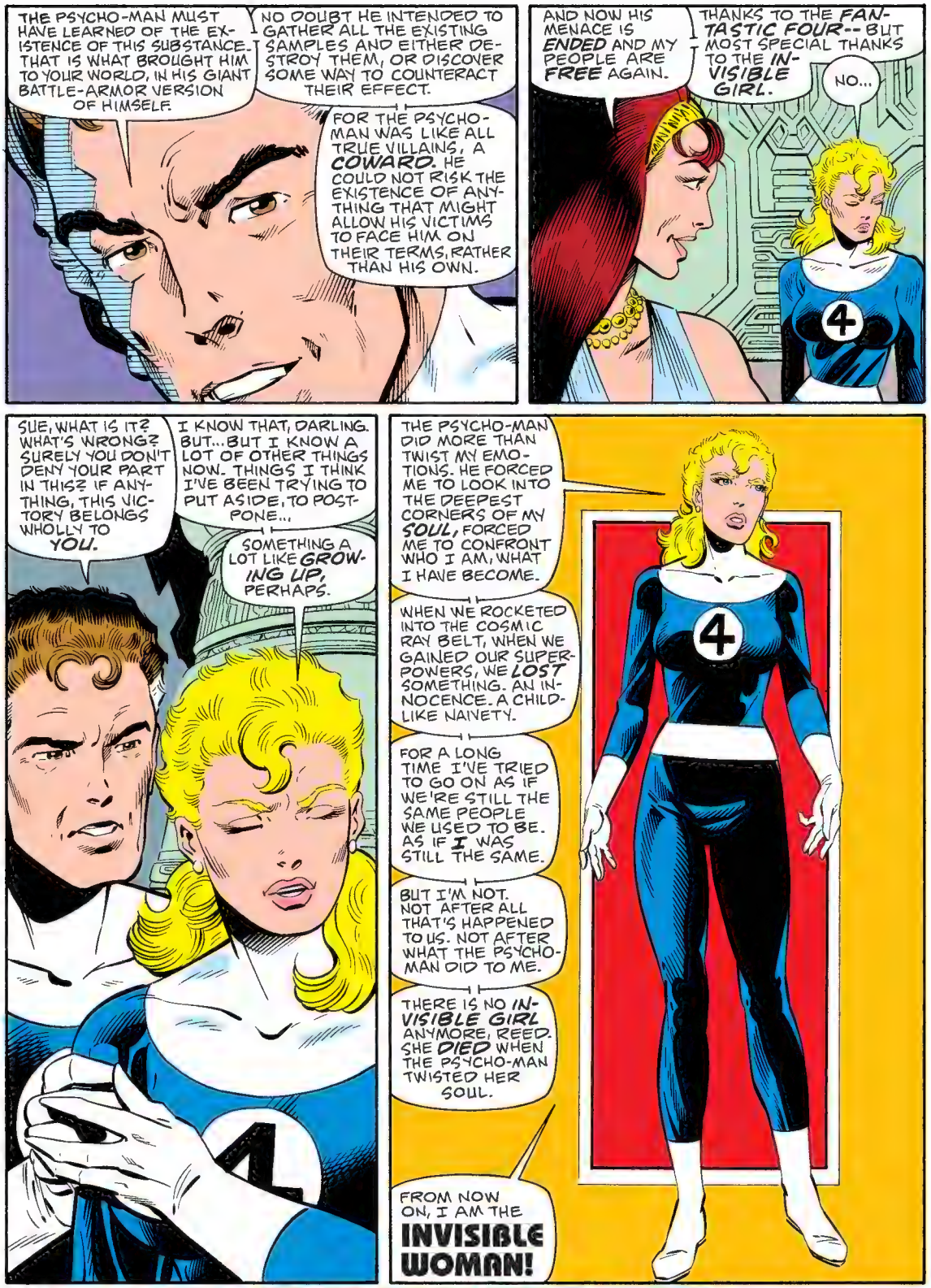

WHEN WE "SPLIT UP" TO SEARCH THE PALACE SEPARATELY, I USED MY POWER TO TURN INVISIBLE AND FOLLOWED REED.
I'D GUESSED BY THEN THAT YOU WERE WATCHING US--I ALSO GUESSED YOU'D SHOW YOURSELF, SOONER OR LATER.
AND I'D BE ABLE TO CAPTURE YOUR EMOTION-CONTROL BOX.
GIVE ME THAT...
UNNGH!
HOLD IT!!
MY INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO PIN YOU LIKE A BUTTERFLY!
YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU, PSYCHO-MAN? IT'S ALL OVER FOR YOU. YOU'VE USED YOUR POWERS AGAINST OTHERS FOR THE VERY LAST TIME.
YOU CAME TO OUR WORLD, YOU CREATED A NEW HATE-MONGER TO SPREAD HIS VILE TEACHINGS OF UNIVERSAL HATRED THROUGH THE PEOPLE. YOU CAUGHT ME OFF-GUARD AND REACHED INSIDE ME TO TWIST AND PERVERT MY MOST PERSONAL FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS.*
YOU DEFILED ME, PSYCHO-MAN. AND NOW YOU ARE GOING TO BE PUNISHED.
FEAR
DOUBT
HATE
*IT ALL HAPPENED IN ISSUE#s 280-281.
YOU... YOU ARE GOING TO K-KILL ME...?
I COULD, PSYCHO-MAN. LORD KNOWS I WANT TO.
BUT THAT WOULD PUT ME EVEN BELOW YOUR LEVEL.
NO, PSYCHO-MAN. I'M GOING TO PAY YOU BACK IN KIND!!


SUE! REED! WHERE ARE YOU?
I'VE SEARCHED THE UPPER LEVELS. THERE'S NO SIGN OF...
HOLY CATS! SHE-HULK!!
TORCH!

GREAT TO SEE YOU ALL IN ONE PIECE, BIG GREEN. WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?
DO YOU NOT REMEMBER ME, JOHNNY STORM?
THAT VOICE...? PEARLA? HOLY COW! IT IS YOU! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!
LONGER THAN I WOULD HAVE WISHED, MY FRIEND...
YEAH, TORCH WHERE ARE REED AND...
PEARLA, YOUR ARM--!
IT'S NO MATTER... BUT, YOUR FRIENDS--!
AHHH
OH!!
WHAT IN...?!?
WHO...?!?

THAT WAS HORRIBLE! IT SOUNDED LIKE SOMEBODY HAVING THEIR SOUL RIPPED OUT!
C'MON, YOU TWO. IT WASN'T FAR AWAY.
SUE! REED! ARE YOU OKAY? THAT SCREAM... THE PSYCHO-MAN...?
WE'RE... ALL RIGHT, JOHNNY.
AS FOR THE PSYCHO-MAN... HE'S BACK IN THERE.
WHAT?! YOU MEAN YOU'VE LEFT HIM ON THE LOOSE? WE'VE GOT TO...
SHE-HULK, STOP!
DON'T GO IN THERE.
THE PSYCHO-MAN IS NO LONGER ANY THREAT TO US.
HE WON'T BOTHER ANYONE.
EVER AGAIN.


LISTEN TO THOSE VOICES, THAT SINGING! I DON'T BELIEVE I'VE EVER HEARD SUCH A JOYOUS SOUND!
A REAL "BEAUTIFUL NOISE," EH, REED? THE LOCALS SURE DO SEEM TO BE HAPPY TO BE OUT FROM UNDER THE PSYCHO-MAN'S OPPRESSION.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, SUE, DARLING? DO YOU FEEL--AH--"OUT FROM UNDER" YET?
I FEEL... BETTER, REED. I SUPPOSE THAT'S A START.
...TO SEE YOU AGAIN, PEARLA, BUT... WELL, LIKE I TOLD YOU, I'VE GOT THIS LADY BACK ON EARTH AND...
WELL, I GUESS YOU'D SAY IT'S ABOUT AS SERIOUS AS IT CAN GET.
I UNDERSTAND, JOHNNY. ONCE, MANY YEARS AGO, I ENTERTAINED THE FANTASY THAT THE GALLANT HERO WHO HAD COME FROM THE WORLD ABOVE MIGHT ONE DAY RETURN, TO SIT BY MY SIDE, AS KING.
BUT AS QUEEN I HAVE COME TO VIEW THINGS, MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY WORLD, MY PEOPLE, DIFFERENTLY.
I HOPE, THOUGH, THAT WE WILL ALWAYS BE FRIENDS...
HEY, YOU KNOW IT, YOUR MAJESTY.
THAT I CANNOT ANSWER.
PERHAPS NOT, PEARLA, BUT I THINK I CAN. IT'S REALLY SURPRISINGLY SIMPLE.
NOW THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND...
HOW COME YOU WEREN'T AFFECTED BY THE PSYCHO-MAN'S POWER?
THAT HEADBAND YOU'VE ALWAYS WORN. WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
WHY, I HAD IT MADE, YEARS AGO, FROM THE GLEAMING FILAMENTS COMMON TO THE MINES OF NUVIDIA.
IT WAS TO... TEASE MY FATHER, WITHOUT HIS EVER KNOWING IT.
JUST AS I SUSPECTED.
THAT METALLIC ORE IS UNIQUE TO THIS PLANET, AND CREATES A COUNTER-FREQUENCY THAT BLOCKS THE PSYCHO-MAN'S RAYS.


THE PSYCHO-MAN MUST HAVE LEARNED OF THE EXISTENCE OF THIS SUBSTANCE. THAT IS WHAT BROUGHT HIM TO YOUR WORLD, IN HIS GIANT BATTLE-ARMOR VERSION OF HIMSELF.
NO DOUBT HE INTENDED TO GATHER ALL THE EXISTING SAMPLES AND EITHER DESTROY THEM, OR DISCOVER SOME WAY TO COUNTERACT THEIR EFFECT.
FOR THE PSYCHO-MAN WAS LIKE ALL TRUE VILLAINS, A COWARD. HE COULD NOT RISK THE EXISTENCE OF ANYTHING THAT MIGHT ALLOW HIS VICTIMS TO FACE HIM ON THEIR TERMS, RATHER THAN HIS OWN.
AND NOW HIS MENACE IS ENDED AND MY PEOPLE ARE FREE AGAIN.
THANKS TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR--BUT MOST SPECIAL THANKS TO THE INVISIBLE GIRL.
NO...
4
SUE, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG? SURELY YOU DON'T DENY YOUR PART IN THIS? IF ANYTHING, THIS VICTORY BELONGS WHOLLY TO YOU.
I KNOW THAT, DARLING. BUT...BUT I KNOW A LOT OF OTHER THINGS NOW. THINGS I THINK I'VE BEEN TRYING TO PUT ASIDE, TO POSTPONE...
SOMETHING A LOT LIKE GROWING UP, PERHAPS.
THE PSYCHO-MAN DID MORE THAN TWIST MY EMOTIONS. HE FORCED ME TO LOOK INTO THE DEEPEST CORNERS OF MY SOUL, FORCED ME TO CONFRONT WHO I AM, WHAT I HAVE BECOME.
WHEN WE ROCKETED INTO THE COSMIC RAY BELT, WHEN WE GAINED OUR SUPERPOWERS, WE LOST SOMETHING. AN INNOCENCE. A CHILDLIKE NAIVETY.
FOR A LONG TIME I'VE TRIED TO GO ON AS IF WE'RE STILL THE SAME PEOPLE WE USED TO BE. AS IF I WAS STILL THE SAME.
BUT I'M NOT. NOT AFTER ALL THAT'S HAPPENED TO US. NOT AFTER WHAT THE PSYCHO-MAN DID TO ME.
THERE IS NO INVISIBLE GIRL ANYMORE, REED. SHE DIED WHEN THE PSYCHO-MAN TWISTED HER SOUL.
FROM NOW ON, I AM THE INVISIBLE WOMAN!
4
NEXT ISSUE: WE'RE BACK ON EARTH AS THE HUMAN TORCH FACES ONE OF THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES OF MODERN SOCIETY. ALL THIS AND THE BEYONDER, TOO!
HERO
YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT!
IN 30 DAYS!

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by JOHN BYRNE with Kim DeMulder and Petra Scotese

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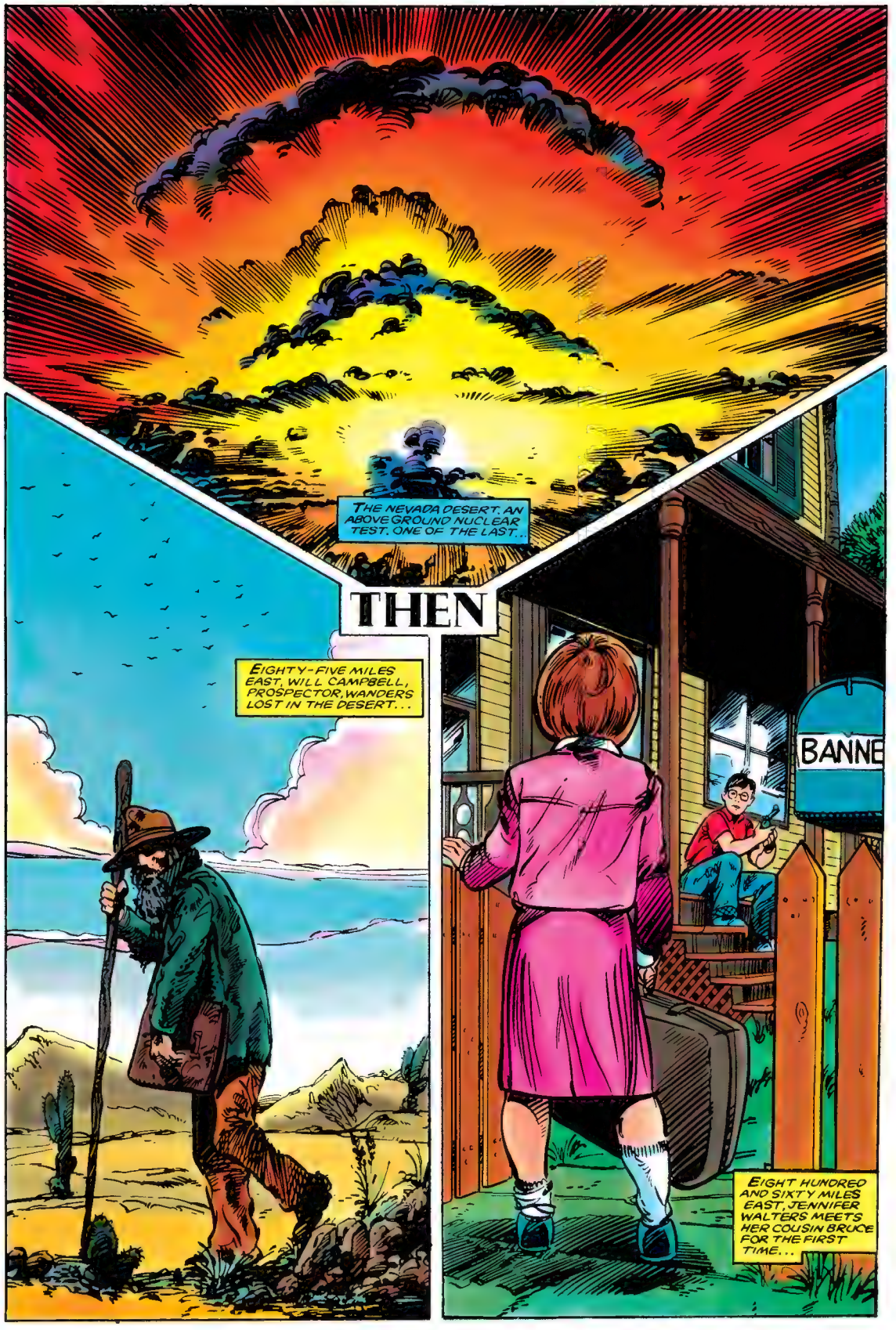
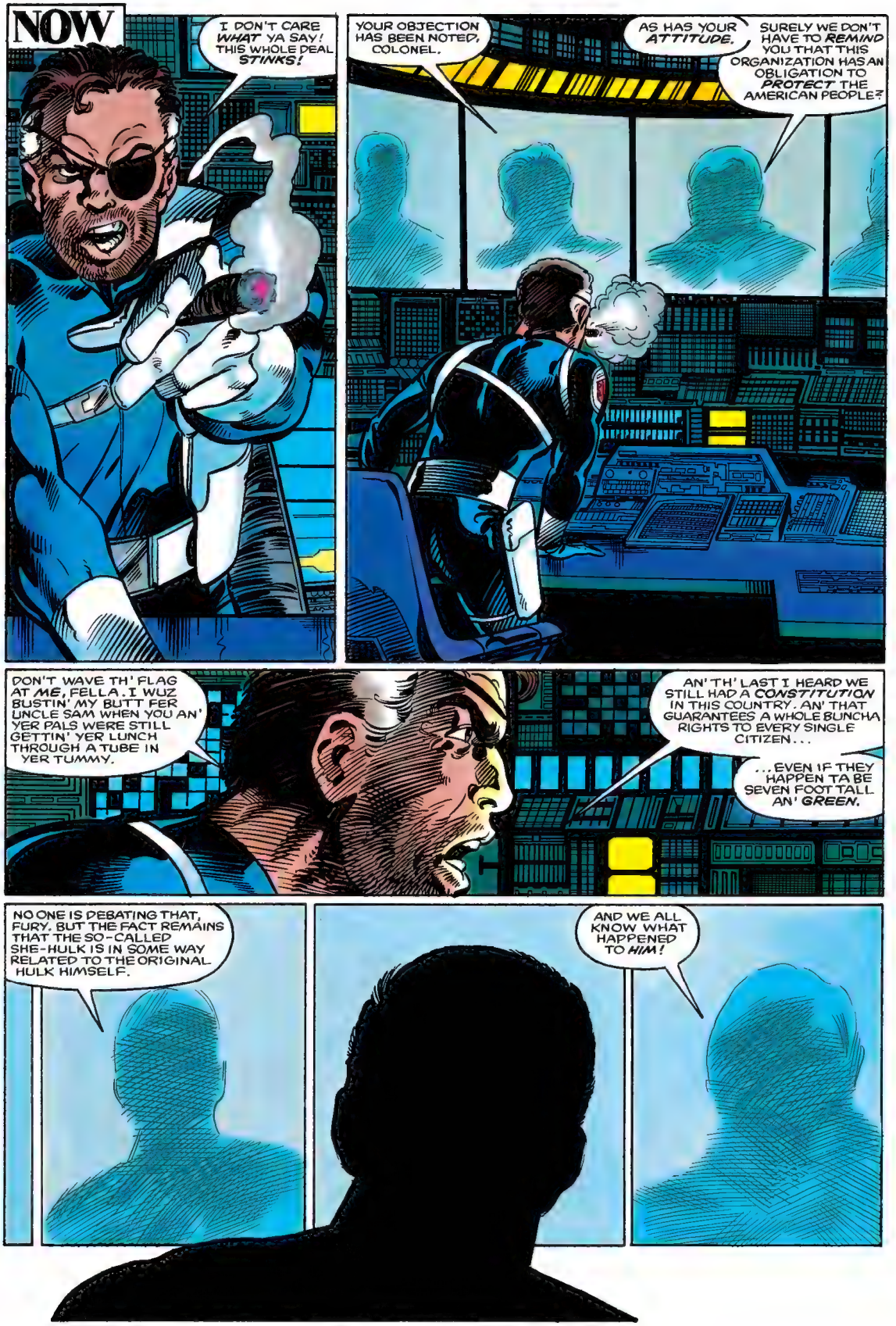
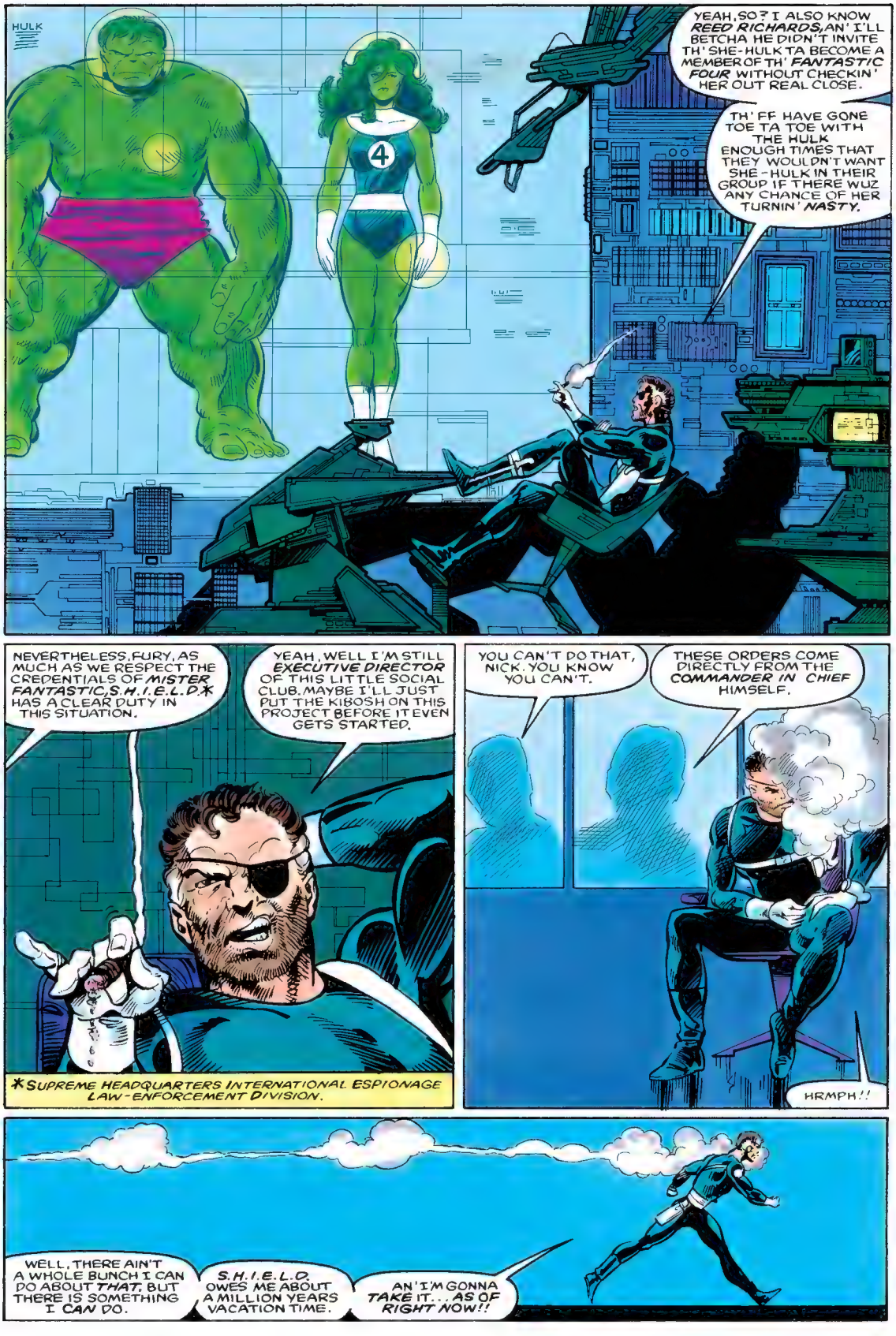
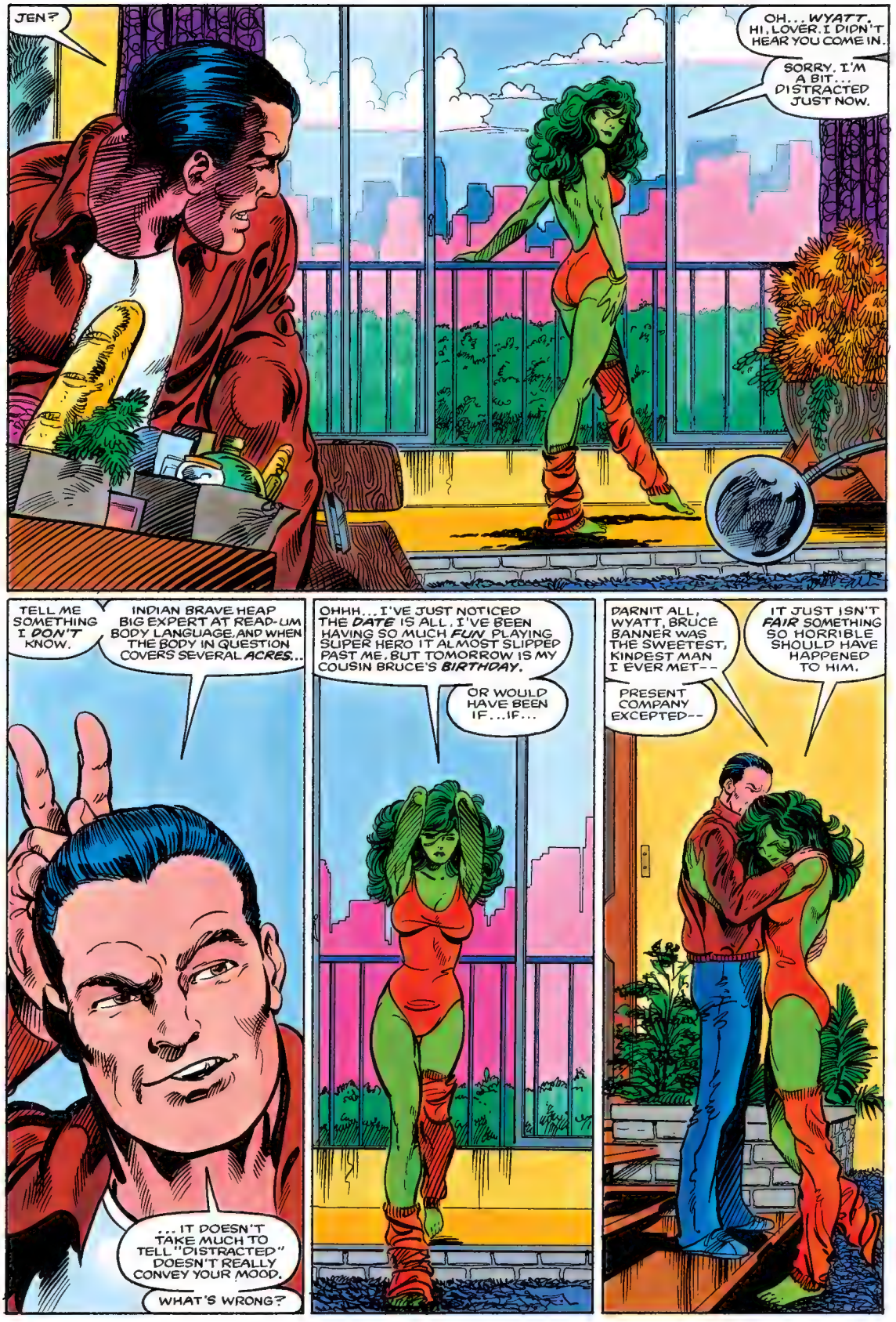

THE NEVADA DESERT. AN ABOVE GROUND NUCLEAR TEST. ONE OF THE LAST...
THEN
EIGHTY-FIVE MILES EAST, WILL CAMPBELL, PROSPECTOR, WANDERS LOST IN THE DESERT...
BANNE
EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY MILES EAST, JENNIFER WALTERS MEETS HER COUSIN BRUCE FOR THE FIRST TIME...

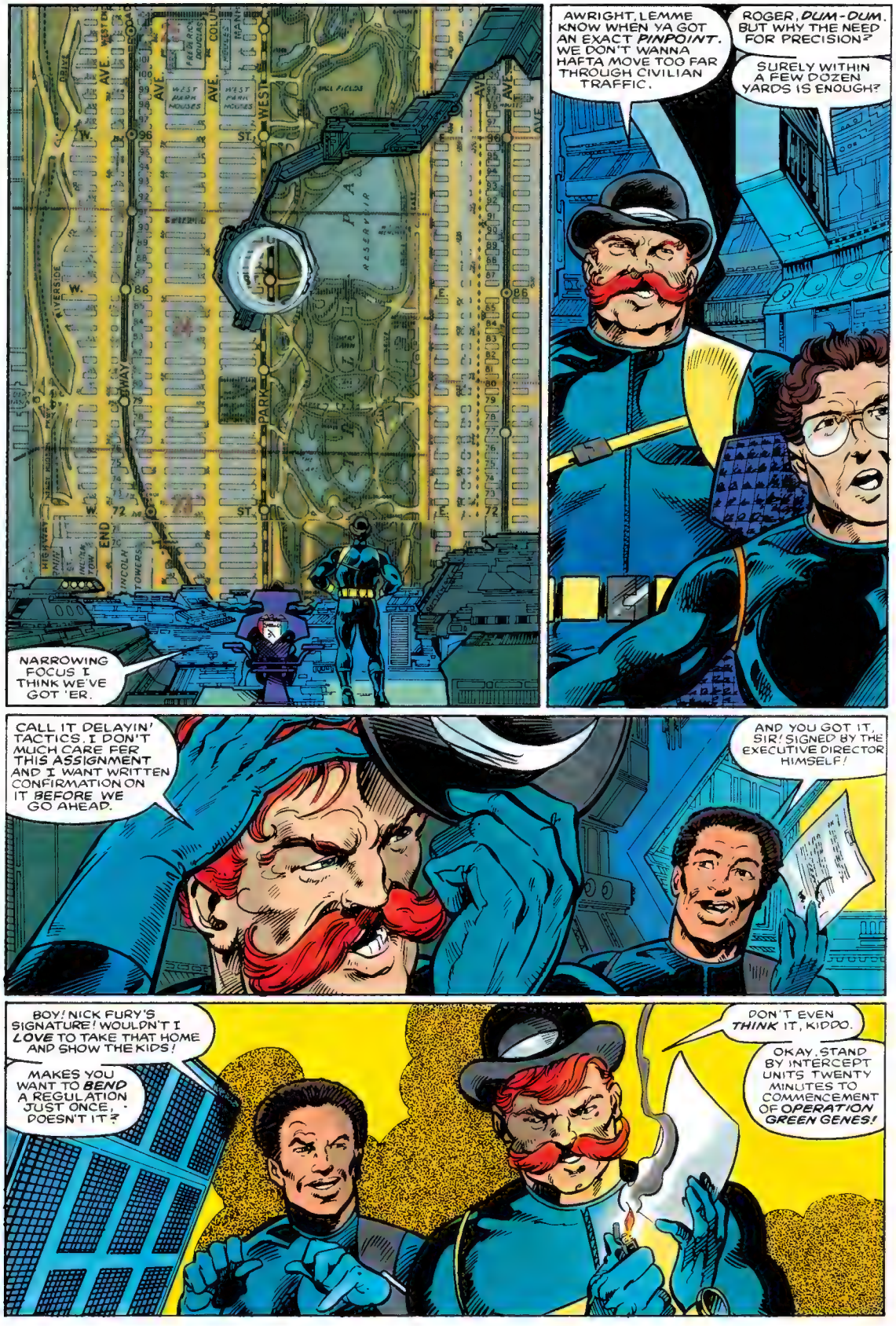

NOW
I DON'T CARE WHAT YA SAY! THIS WHOLE DEAL STINKS!
YOUR OBJECTION HAS BEEN NOTED, COLONEL.
AS HAS YOUR ATTITUDE.
SURELY WE DON'T HAVE TO REMIND YOU THAT THIS ORGANIZATION HAS AN OBLIGATION TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE?
DON'T WAVE TH' FLAG AT ME, FELLA. I WUZ BUSTIN' MY BUTT FER UNCLE SAM WHEN YOU AN' YER PALS WERE STILL GETTIN' YER LUNCH THROUGH A TUBE IN YER TUMMY.
AN' TH' LAST I HEARD WE STILL HAD A CONSTITUTION IN THIS COUNTRY. AN' THAT GUARANTEES A WHOLE BUNCHA RIGHTS TO EVERY SINGLE CITIZEN...
...EVEN IF THEY HAPPEN TA BE SEVEN FOOT TALL AN' GREEN.
NO ONE IS DEBATING THAT, FURY. BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE SO-CALLED SHE-HULK IS IN SOME WAY RELATED TO THE ORIGINAL HULK HIMSELF.
AND WE ALL KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!


HULK
4
YEAH, SO? I ALSO KNOW REED RICHARDS, AN' I'LL BETCHA HE DIDN'T INVITE TH' SHE-HULK TA BECOME A MEMBER OF TH' FANTASTIC FOUR WITHOUT CHECKIN' HER OUT REAL CLOSE.
TH' FF HAVE GONE TOE TA TOE WITH THE HULK ENOUGH TIMES THAT THEY WOULDN'T WANT SHE-HULK IN THEIR GROUP IF THERE WUZ ANY CHANCE OF HER TURNIN' NASTY.
NEVERTHELESS, FURY, AS MUCH AS WE RESPECT THE CREDENTIALS OF MISTER FANTASTIC, S.H.I.E.L.D.* HAS A CLEAR DUTY IN THIS SITUATION.
YEAH, WELL I'M STILL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THIS LITTLE SOCIAL CLUB, MAYBE I'LL JUST PUT THE KIBOSH ON THIS PROJECT BEFORE IT EVEN GETS STARTED.
*SUPREME HEADQUARTERS INTERNATIONAL ESPIONAGE LAW-ENFORCEMENT DIVISION.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT, NICK. YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T.
THESE ORDERS COME DIRECTLY FROM THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF HIMSELF.
HRMPH!!
WELL, THERE AIN'T A WHOLE BUNCH I CAN DO ABOUT THAT. BUT THERE IS SOMETHING I CAN DO.
S.H.I.E.L.D. OWES ME ABOUT A MILLION YEARS VACATION TIME.
AN' I'M GONNA TAKE IT... AS OF RIGHT NOW!!

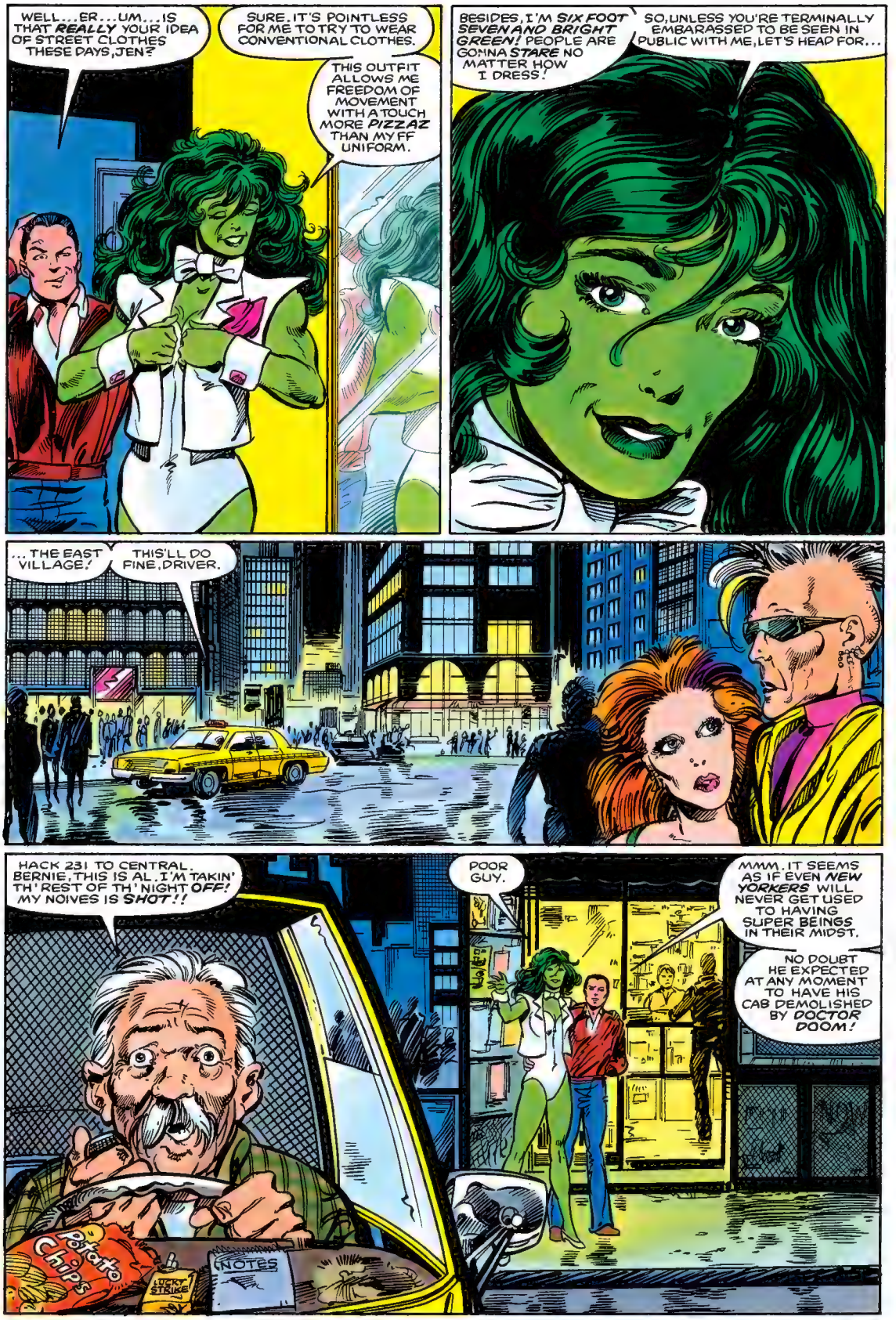
HELLO, JEN, I... JEN?
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

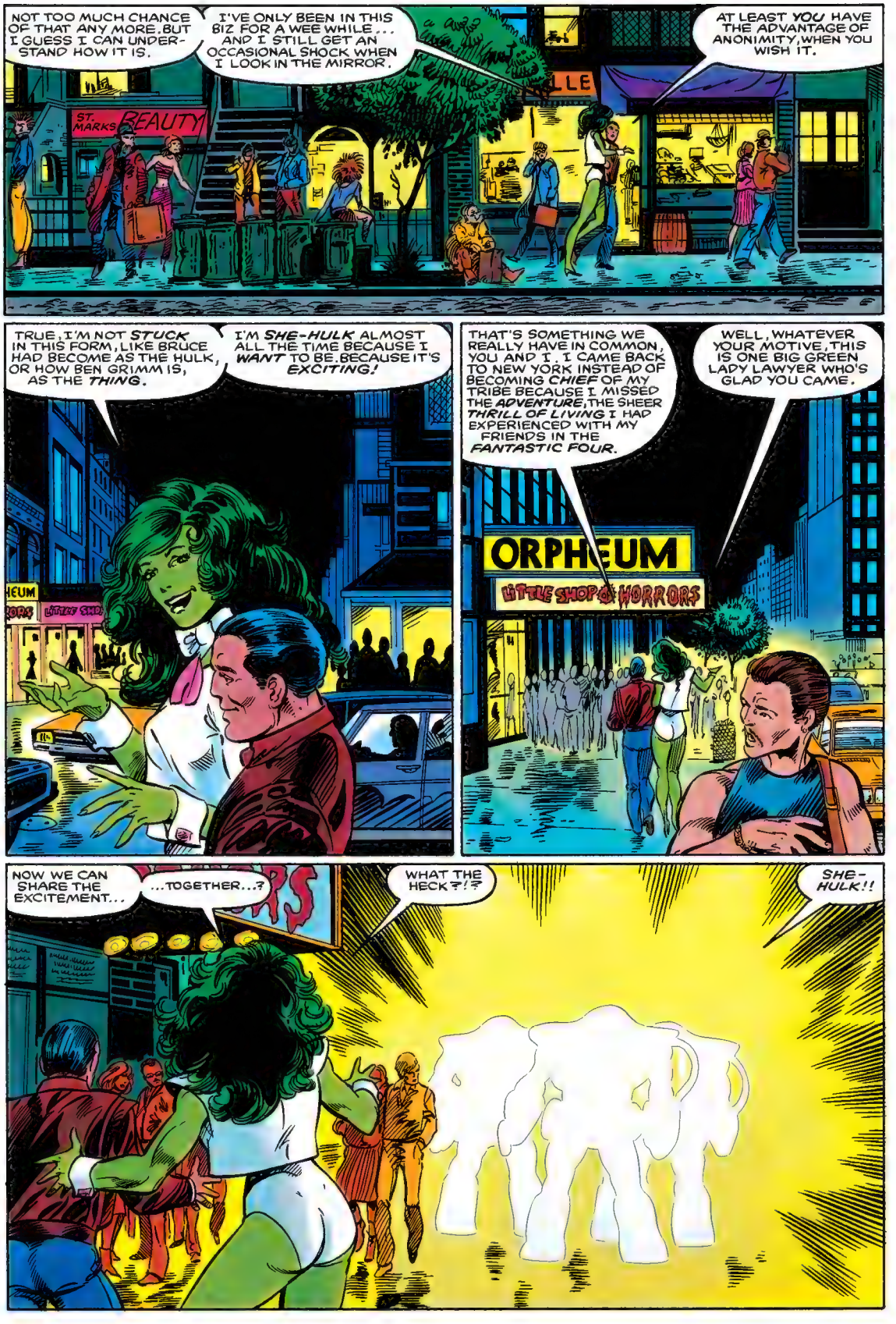

JEN?
OH... WYATT. HI, LOVER. I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN.
SORRY. I'M A BIT... DISTRACTED JUST NOW.
TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW.
INDIAN BRAVE HEAP BIG EXPERT AT READ-UM BODY LANGUAGE, AND WHEN THE BODY IN QUESTION COVERS SEVERAL ACRES...
... IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO TELL "DISTRACTED" DOESN'T REALLY CONVEY YOUR MOOD.
WHAT'S WRONG?
OHHH... I'VE JUST NOTICED THE DATE IS ALL I'VE BEEN HAVING SO MUCH FUN PLAYING SUPER HERO IT ALMOST SLIPPED PAST ME. BUT TOMORROW IS MY COUSIN BRUCE'S BIRTHDAY.
OR WOULD HAVE BEEN IF... IF...
DARNIT ALL, WYATT, BRUCE BANNER WAS THE SWEETEST, KINDEST MAN I EVER MET--
PRESENT COMPANY EXCEPTED--
IT JUST ISN'T FAIR SOMETHING SO HORRIBLE SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM.

LIFE IS VERY RARELY FAIR, JENNIFER. THE BEST WE CAN DO IS TO TAKE WHATEVER IT THROWS AT US AND TRY TO TURN IT INTO SOMETHING USEFUL.
THE TRAGEDY OF BRUCE BANNER'S LIFE IS VIRTUALLY WITHOUT EQUAL, BUT AT LEAST THE WORLD GAINED SOMETHING OUT OF IT: YOU.
WITHOUT A HULK THERE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN A SHE-HULK...
AND WITHOUT SHE-HULK THERE'D NEVER HAVE BEEN US.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
THANKS, BABE. YOU ALWAYS KNOW THE RIGHT THING TO SAY.
NOW, I HAVE HERE TWO TICKETS FOR THE SHOW REED AND SUE SO HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
WHAT SAY WE TRY TO FORGET THE WOES OF THE WORLD FOR AN EVENING, AND JUST ENJOY OURSELVES?
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME!
AND I KNOW JUST HOW I WANT TO START!
TIME
HEY!!


NARROWING FOCUS I THINK WE'VE GOT 'ER.
AWRIGHT, LEMME KNOW WHEN YA GOT AN EXACT PINPOINT. WE DON'T WANNA HAFTA MOVE TOO FAR THROUGH CIVILIAN TRAFFIC.
ROGER, DUM-DUM. BUT WHY THE NEED FOR PRECISION?
SURELY WITHIN A FEW DOZEN YARDS IS ENOUGH?
CALL IT DELAYIN' TACTICS. I DON'T MUCH CARE FER THIS ASSIGNMENT AND I WANT WRITTEN CONFIRMATION ON IT BEFORE WE GO AHEAD.
AND YOU GOT IT, SIR! SIGNED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HIMSELF!
BOY! NICK FURY'S SIGNATURE! WOULDN'T I LOVE TO TAKE THAT HOME AND SHOW THE KIDS!
MAKES YOU WANT TO BEND A REGULATION JUST ONCE, DOESN'T IT?
DON'T EVEN THINK IT, KIDDO.
OKAY. STAND BY INTERCEPT UNITS TWENTY MINUTES TO COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATION GREEN GENES!

JEN, ARE YOU NEARLY FINISHED IN THERE? WE'RE RUNNING A LITTLE BEHIND SCHEDULE.
SORRY, SWEETS. LATE I MAY BE...
... BUT SURELY WORTH WAITING FOR?

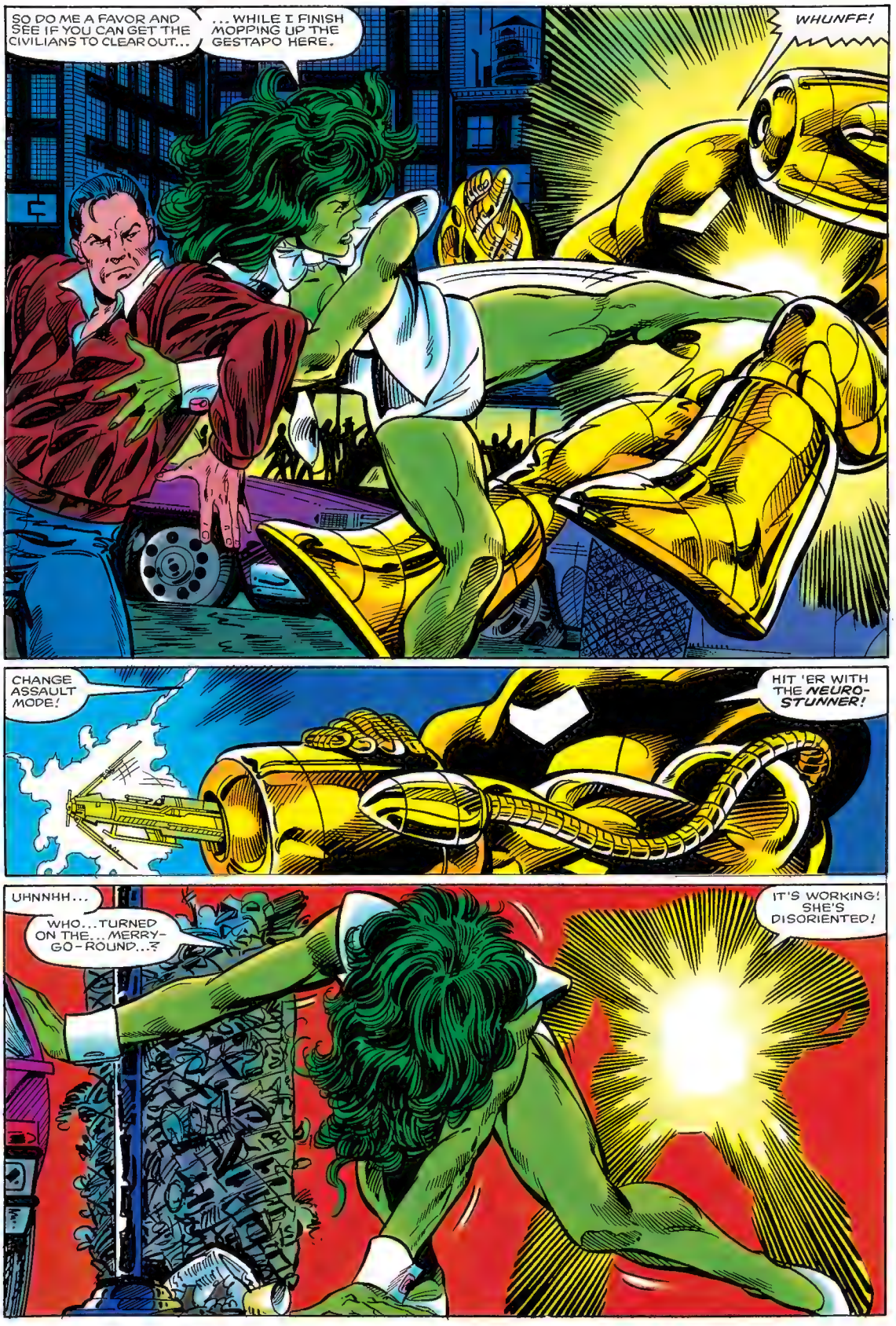

WELL...ER...UM...IS THAT REALLY YOUR IDEA OF STREET CLOTHES THESE DAYS, JEN?
SURE. IT'S POINTLESS FOR ME TO TRY TO WEAR CONVENTIONAL CLOTHES.
THIS OUTFIT ALLOWS ME FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WITH A TOUCH MORE PIZZAZ THAN MY FF UNIFORM.
BESIDES, I'M SIX FOOT SEVEN AND BRIGHT GREEN! PEOPLE ARE GONNA STARE NO MATTER HOW I DRESS!
SO, UNLESS YOU'RE TERMINALLY EMBARASSED TO BE SEEN IN PUBLIC WITH ME, LET'S HEAD FOR...
...THE EAST VILLAGE!
THIS'LL DO FINE, DRIVER.
HACK 231 TO CENTRAL. BERNIE, THIS IS AL. I'M TAKIN' TH' REST OF TH' NIGHT OFF! MY NOIVES IS SHOT!!
POOR GUY.
MMM. IT SEEMS AS IF EVEN NEW YORKERS WILL NEVER GET USED TO HAVING SUPER BEINGS IN THEIR MIDST.
NO DOUBT HE EXPECTED AT ANY MOMENT TO HAVE HIS CAB DEMOLISHED BY DOCTOR DOOM!
Potato Chips
LUCKY STRIKE
NOTES

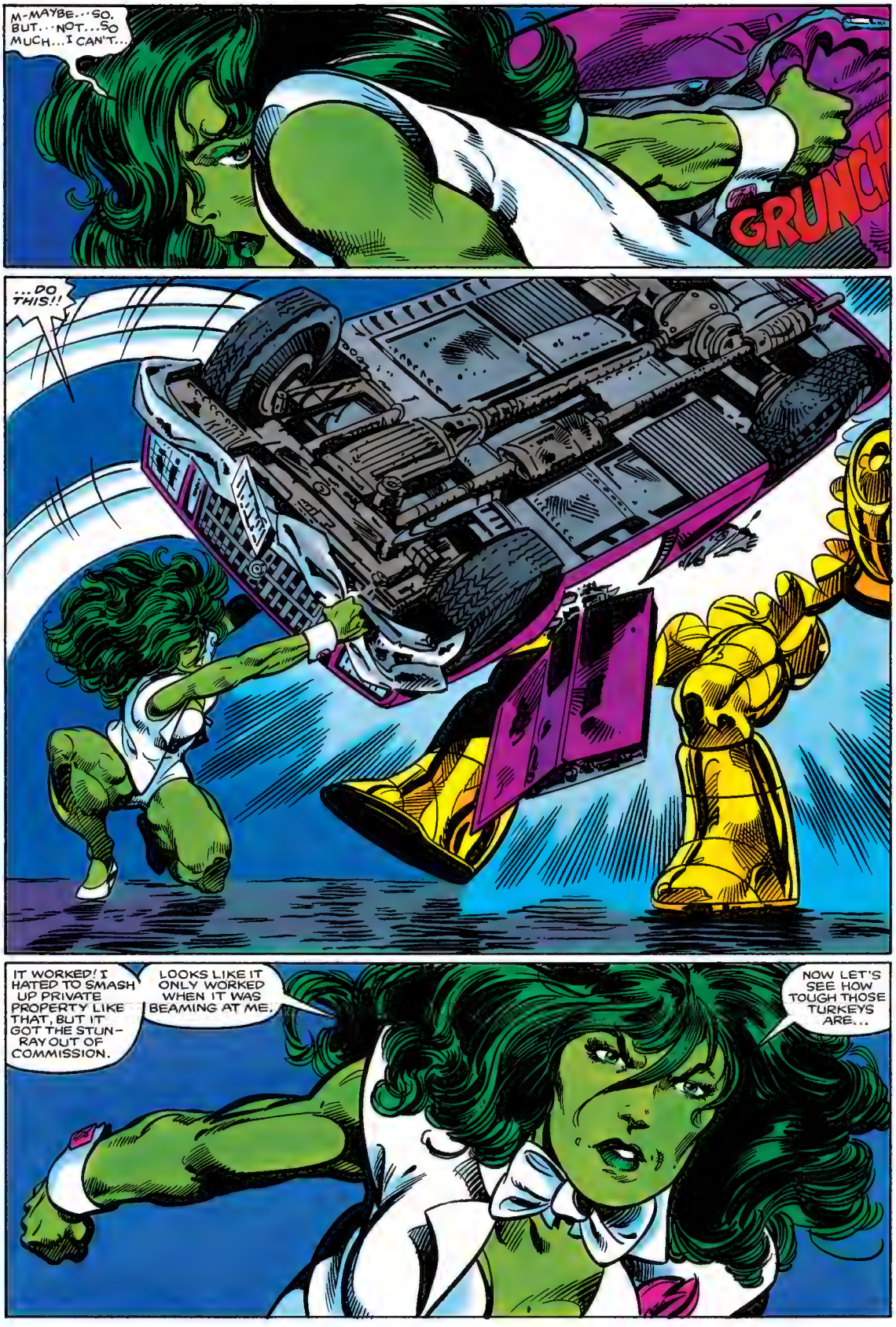

NOT TOO MUCH CHANCE OF THAT ANY MORE. BUT I GUESS I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW IT IS.
I'VE ONLY BEEN IN THIS BIZ FOR A WEE WHILE... AND I STILL GET AN OCCASIONAL SHOCK WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR.
AT LEAST YOU HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF ANONIMITY, WHEN YOU WISH IT.
ST. MARKS BEAUTY
TRUE, I'M NOT STUCK IN THIS FORM, LIKE BRUCE HAD BECOME AS THE HULK, OR HOW BEN GRIMM IS, AS THE THING.
I'M SHE-HULK ALMOST ALL THE TIME BECAUSE I WANT TO BE. BECAUSE IT'S EXCITING!
THAT'S SOMETHING WE REALLY HAVE IN COMMON, YOU AND I. I CAME BACK TO NEW YORK INSTEAD OF BECOMING CHIEF OF MY TRIBE BECAUSE I MISSED THE ADVENTURE, THE SHEER THRILL OF LIVING I HAD EXPERIENCED WITH MY FRIENDS IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
WELL, WHATEVER YOUR MOTIVE, THIS IS ONE BIG GREEN LADY LAWYER WHO'S GLAD YOU CAME.
ORPHEUM
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
NOW WE CAN SHARE THE EXCITEMENT...
...TOGETHER...?
WHAT THE HECK?!?
SHE-HULK!!

OKAY, STAND BACK EVERYBODY! THIS IS OFFICIAL S.H.I.E.L.D. BUSINESS!
WYATT WINGFOOT, STEP CLEAR! WE'RE NOT INTERESTED IN YOU TODAY!
NOW, MOVE IT, SHE-HULK YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
L7
L3
L
ARREST?!?
HOLD THE PHONE, IRONSIDES, LET'S SEE SOME PAPER ON THAT FIRST! I ASSUME YOU'VE GOT A WARRANT?
HEY, WAKE UP AN' SMELL THE COFFEE, GREENIE!
WE'RE S.H.I.E.L.D. WE DON'T NEED WARRANTS!
L3

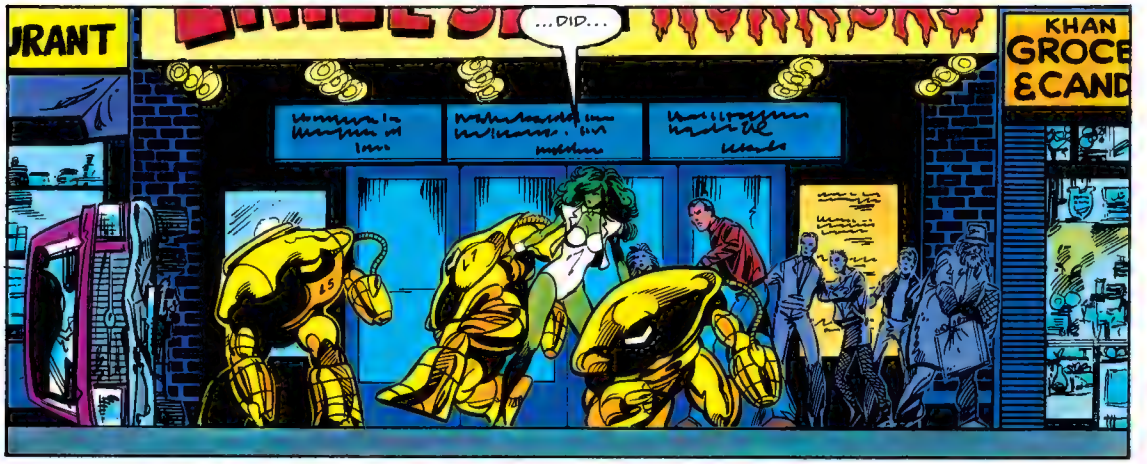
GUESS AGAIN, PAL. 1984 CAME AND WENT!
TUN
NNG!
HEY!!
BLAST HER!! KNOCK HER OUT! FAST!!
CIVILIANS! CLEAR THE AREA! THIS IS A TOP PRIORITY COMMAND!
ANYONE INTERFERING WITH US WILL FACE FEDERAL PROSECUTION!

NO WAY, MY FRIEND. SHE-HULK HAPPENS TO BE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.
YOU DON'T ROUST HER WITHOUT ADEQUATE REASON!
YEAH! C'MON, PEOPLE! LET'S SHOW THESE TIN-PLATED NAZIS THIS IS STILL THE USA!
L5
MAYBE YOU DIDN'T HEAR ME!
WYATT!
S'OKAY, BABY. I GOTCHA!
BUT THOSE CLOWNS SURE DON'T SEEM TOO CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC, DO THEY?

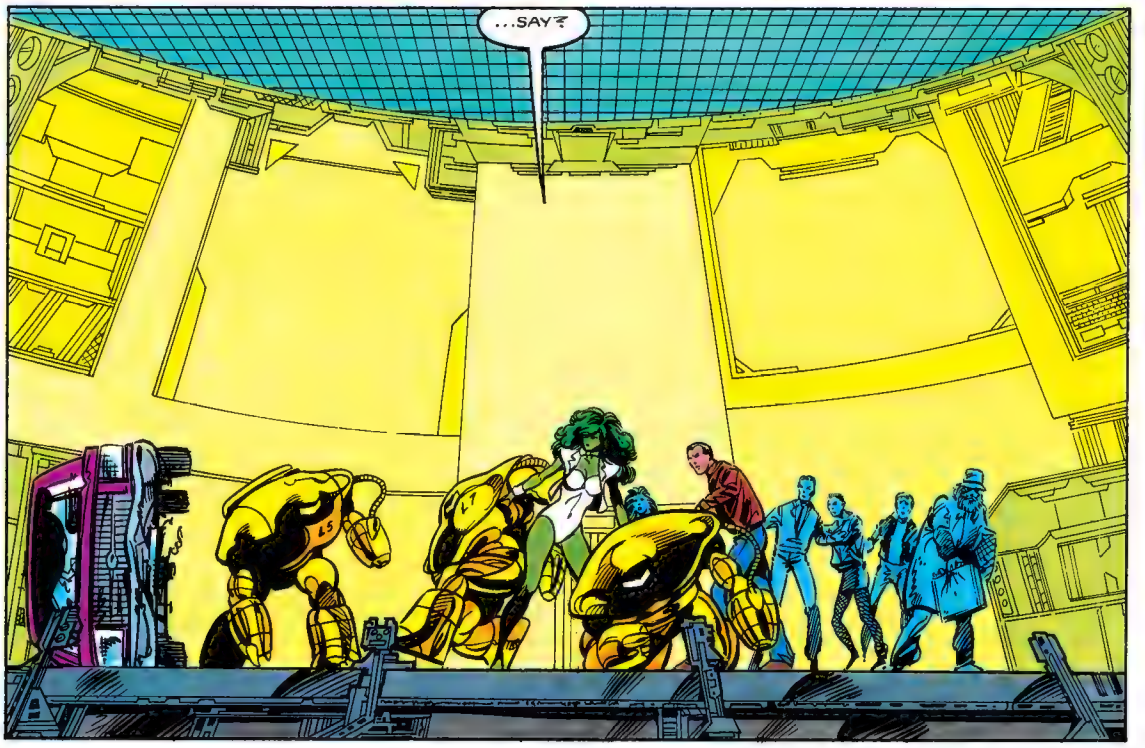

SO DO ME A FAVOR AND SEE IF YOU CAN GET THE CIVILIANS TO CLEAR OUT...
...WHILE I FINISH MOPPING UP THE GESTAPO HERE.
WHUNFF!
CHANGE ASSAULT MODE!
HIT 'ER WITH THE NEURO-STUNNER!
UHNNHH...
WHO...TURNED ON THE...MERRY-GO-ROUND...?
IT'S WORKING! SHE'S DISORIENTED!


M-MAYBE...SO. BUT...NOT...SO MUCH...I CAN'T...
GRUNCH
...DO THIS!!
IT WORKED! I HATED TO SMASH UP PRIVATE PROPERTY LIKE THAT, BUT IT GOT THE STUN-RAY OUT OF COMMISSION.
LOOKS LIKE IT ONLY WORKED WHEN IT WAS BEAMING AT ME.
NOW LET'S SEE HOW TOUGH THOSE TURKEYS ARE...

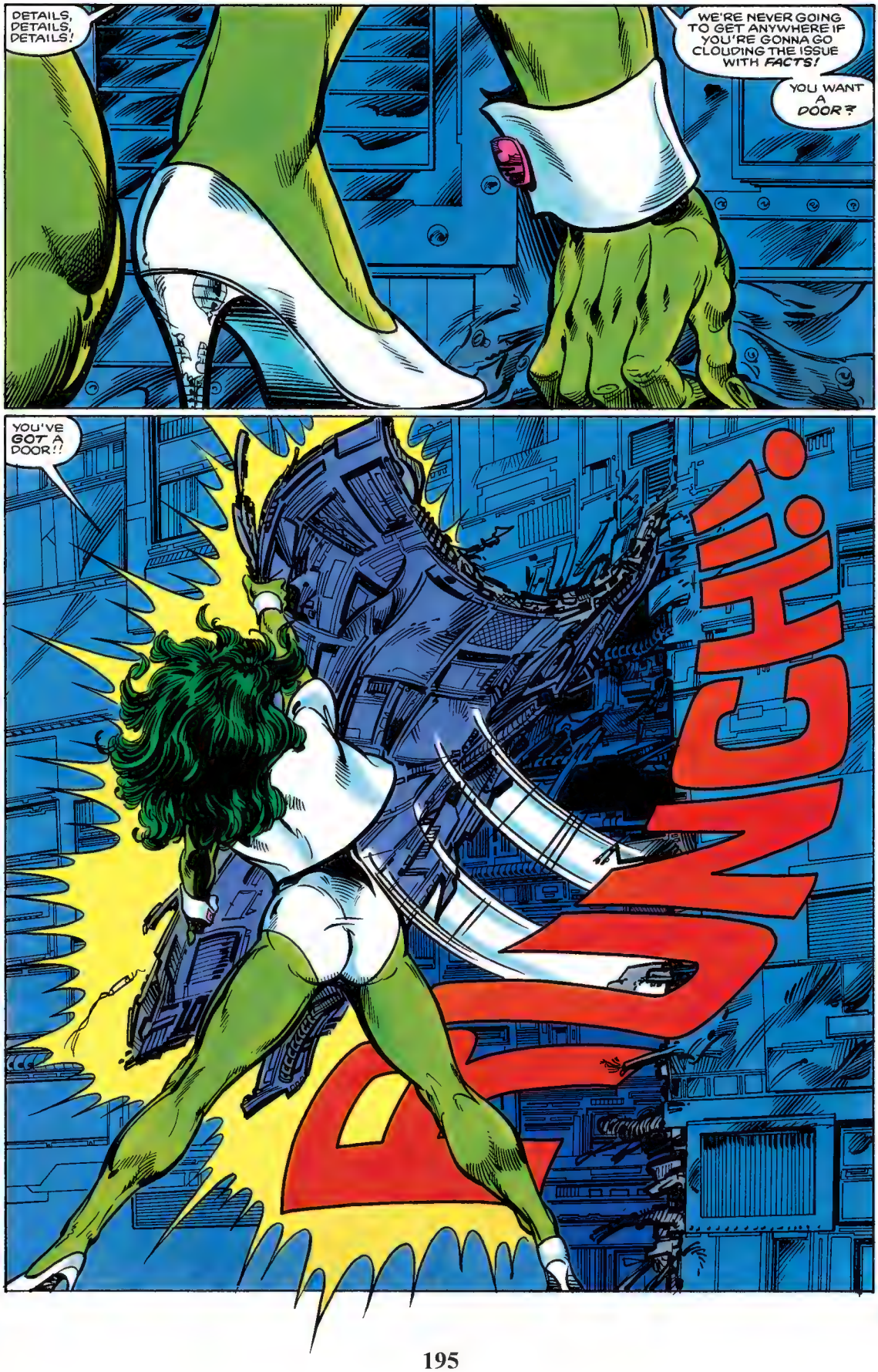
...WHEN I START SERIOUSLY CLIPPING THEIR WINGS...
HEY!
L7
NIGHTY-NIGHT, BOYS!
SLUNG
DAMMIT ALL! SHE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS TOUGH!
L5
UNIT FIVE TO CENTRAL. UNIT FIVE TO CENTRAL.
WE CANNOT CONTAIN TARGET. REQUEST EMERGENCY PULL-OUT. FULL QUADRANT TRANSPORTATION.
HUH?
WHAT...

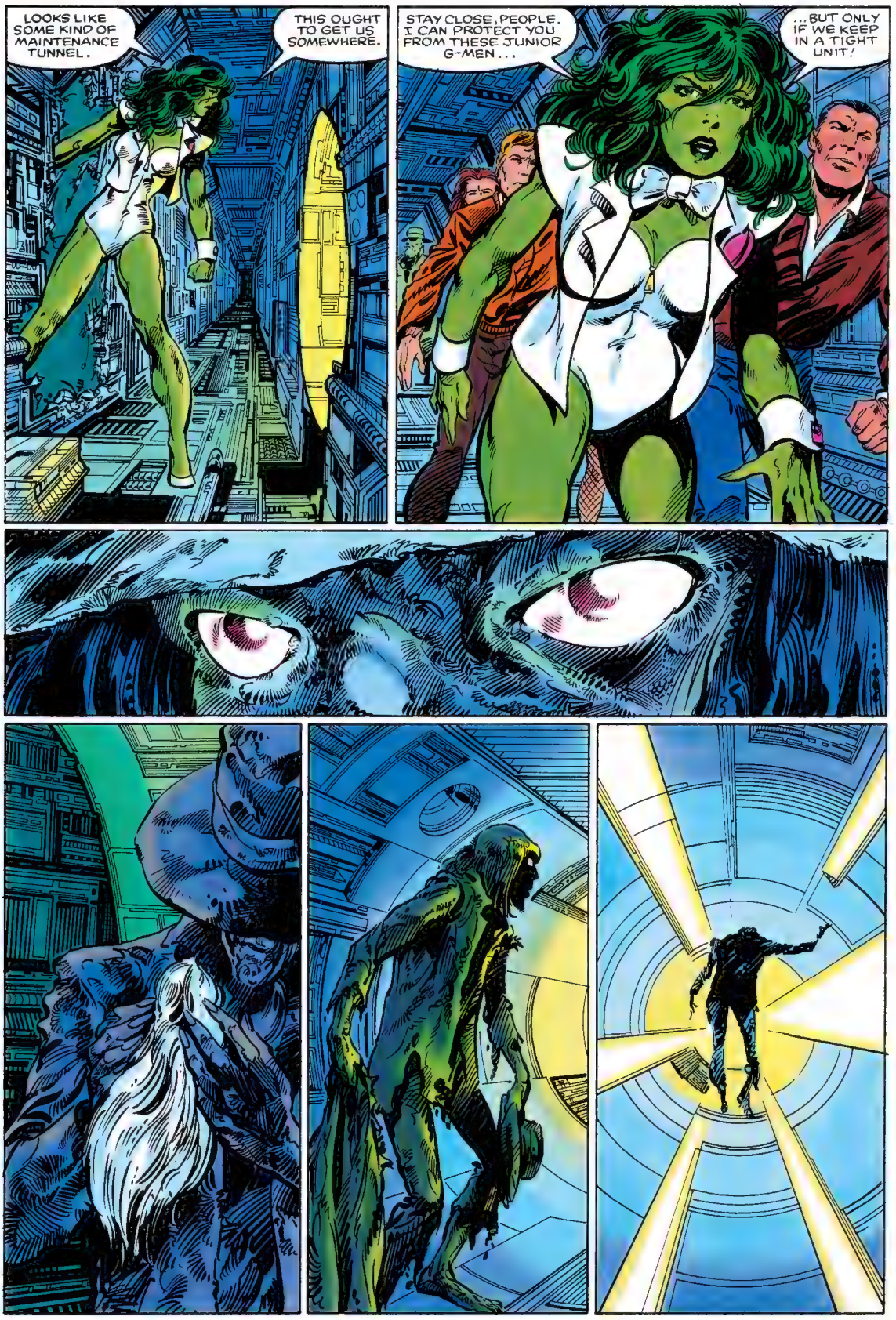

...DID...
KHAN
GROCE
&CAND

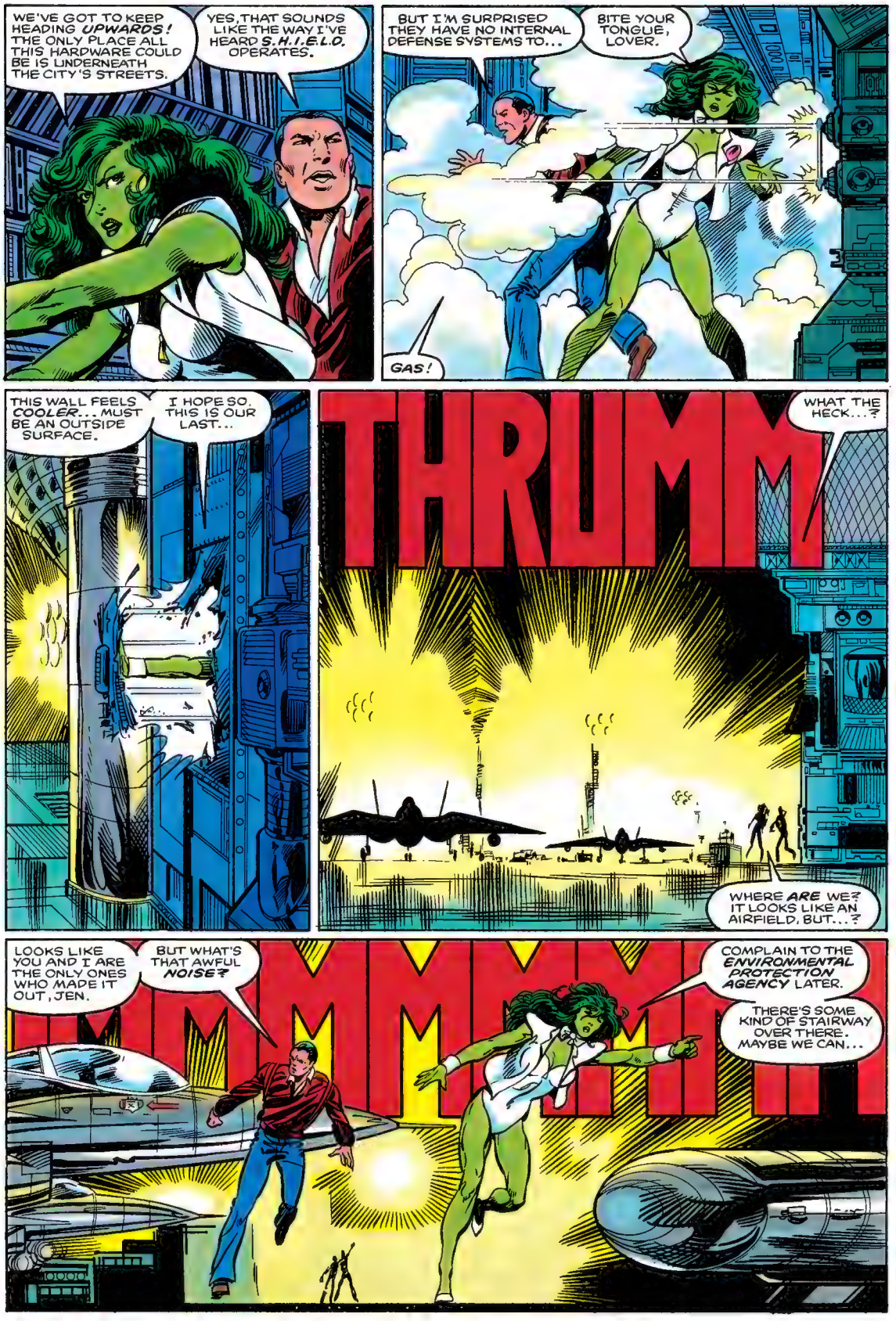
...HE...
KHAN
GROCE
&CAND

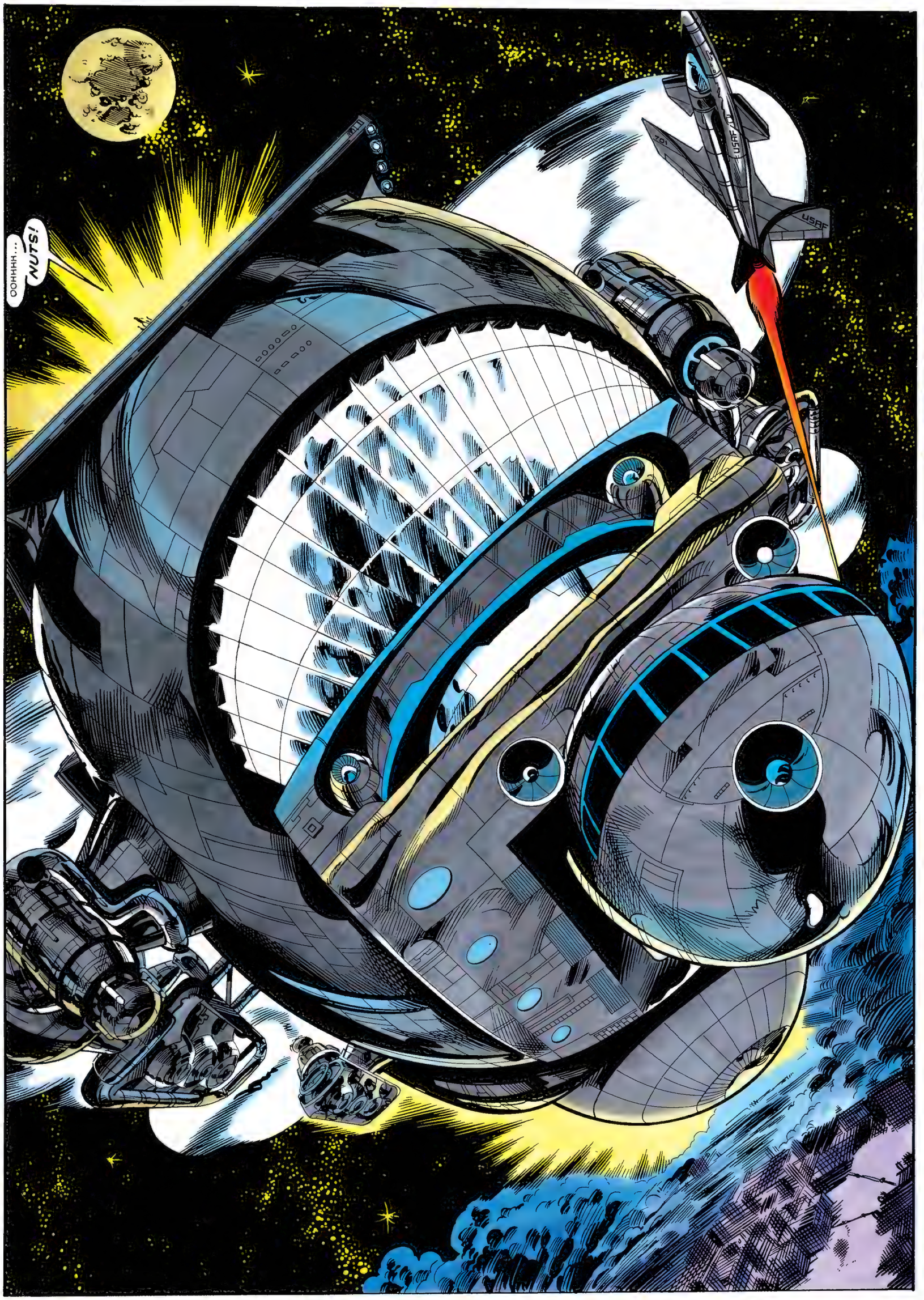

...SAY?

OKAY, EVERYBODY JUST HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
MURPHY, SEPARATE OUT THE CIVILIANS FOR DE-BRIEFING.
SHE-HULK... DON'T YOU EVEN BREATHE!!
SORRY. IF I STOP DOING THAT IT'LL DISAPPOINT MY MILLIONS OF FANS.
SO I'LL HAVE TO KEEP RIGHT ON BREATHING...
...AND MOVING!
CATCH!!
NICELY DONE, SHE-HULK. THAT SLOWED THEM DOWN SUBSTANTIALLY!
GOOD!
NOW, FOLLOW ME, EVERYONE! LET'S FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS LEFTOVER STAR TREK SET!
BUT... THERE'S NO DOOR THIS WAY...?

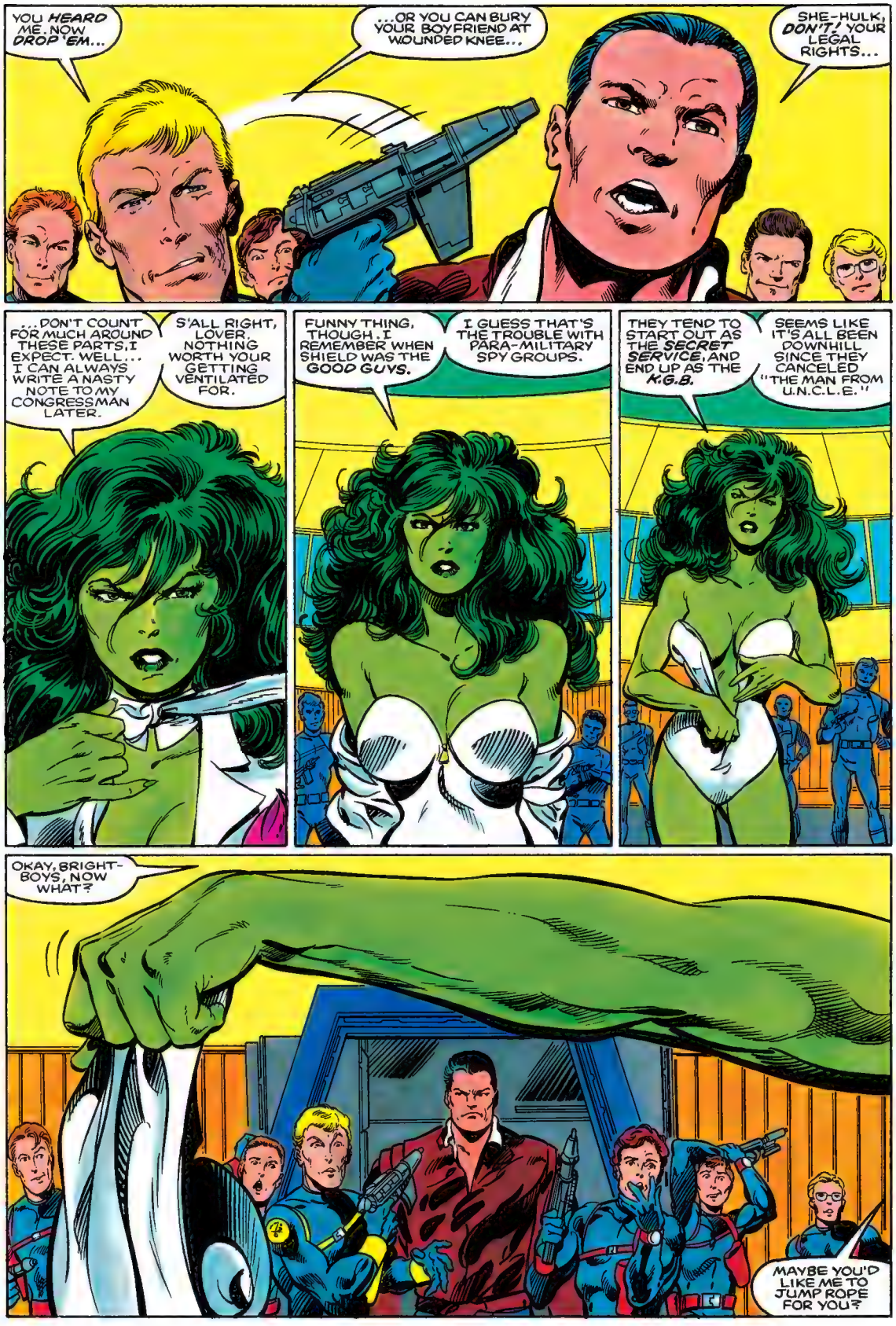

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS!
WE'RE NEVER GOING TO GET ANYWHERE IF YOU'RE GONNA GO CLOUDING THE ISSUE WITH FACTS!
YOU WANT A DOOR?
YOU'VE GOT A DOOR!!
CRUNCH!!


LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF MAINTENANCE TUNNEL.
THIS OUGHT TO GET US SOMEWHERE.
STAY CLOSE, PEOPLE. I CAN PROTECT YOU FROM THESE JUNIOR G-MEN...
...BUT ONLY IF WE KEEP IN A TIGHT UNIT!

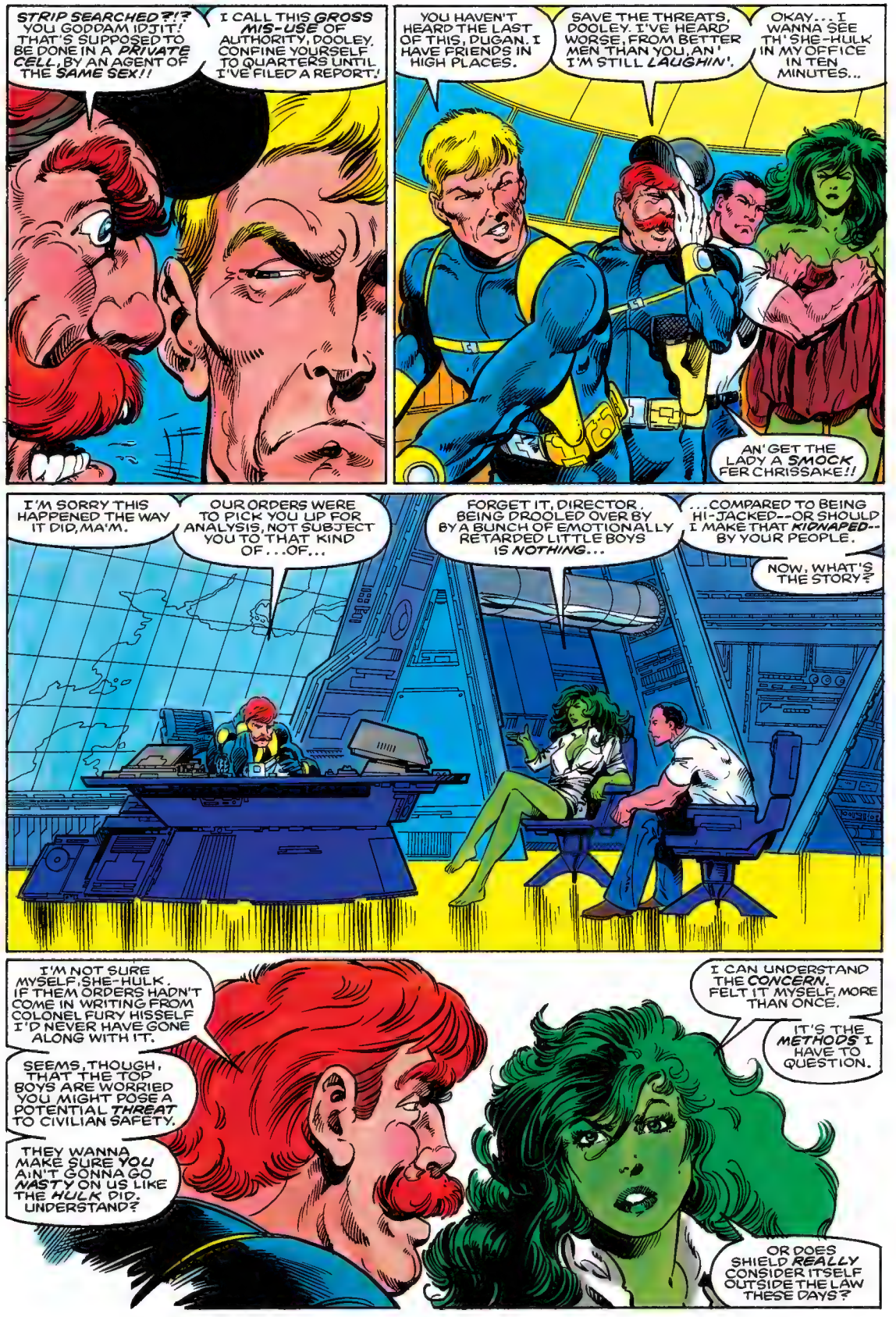

WE'VE GOT TO KEEP HEADING UPWARDS! THE ONLY PLACE ALL THIS HARDWARE COULD BE IS UNDERNEATH THE CITY'S STREETS.
YES, THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE WAY I'VE HEARD S.H.I.E.L.D. OPERATES.
BUT I'M SURPRISED THEY HAVE NO INTERNAL DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO...
BITE YOUR TONGUE, LOVER.
GAS!
THIS WALL FEELS COOLER... MUST BE AN OUTSIDE SURFACE.
I HOPE SO. THIS IS OUR LAST...
THRUMM
WHAT THE HECK...?
WHERE ARE WE? IT LOOKS LIKE AN AIRFIELD, BUT...?
LOOKS LIKE YOU AND I ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO MADE IT OUT, JEN.
BUT WHAT'S THAT AWFUL NOISE?
MMMM
COMPLAIN TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY LATER.
THERE'S SOME KIND OF STAIRWAY OVER THERE. MAYBE WE CAN...

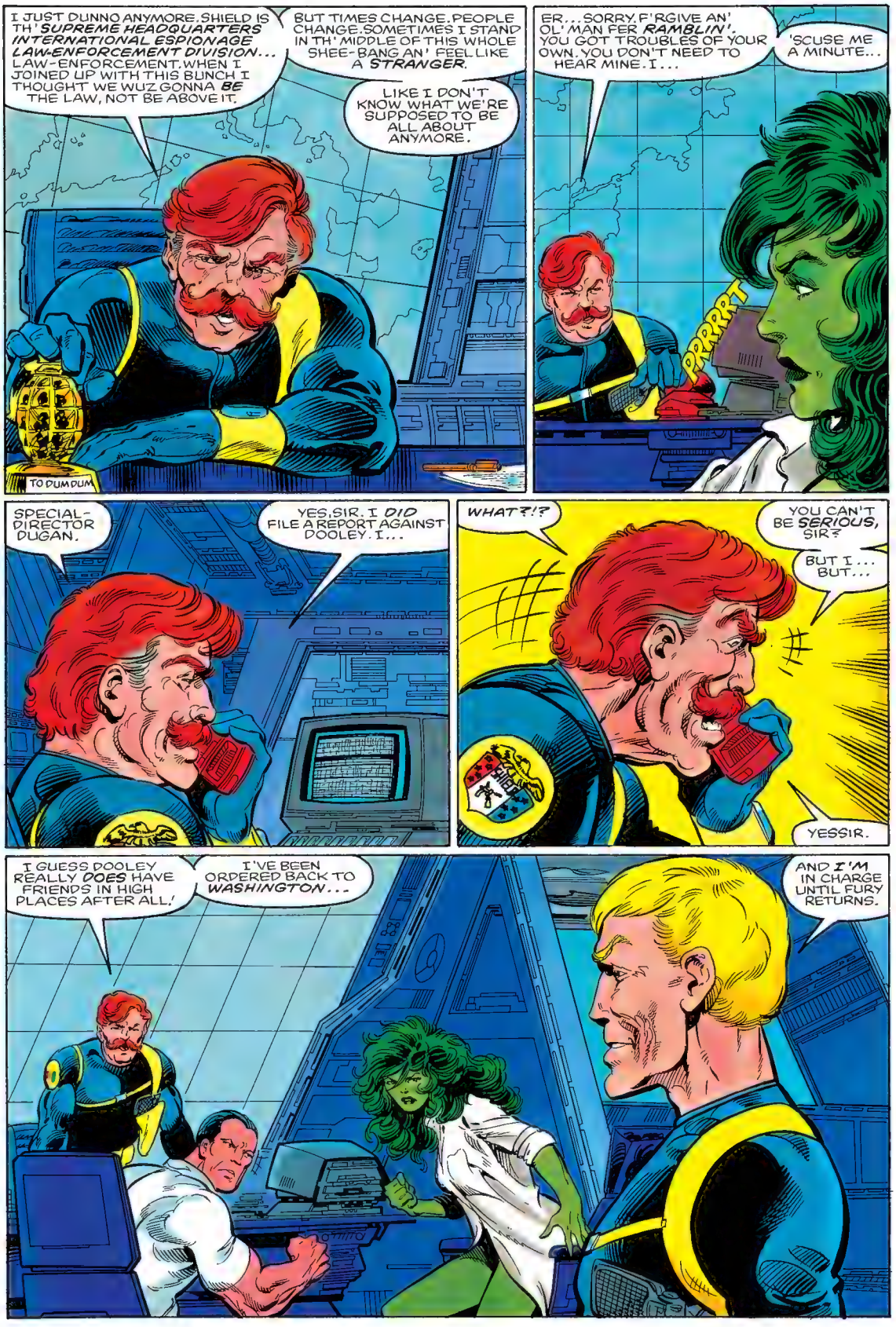

OOHHHH...
NUTS!
USAF
101

WE'RE ON SHIELD'S FLYING AIRCRAFT CARRIER! I REALLY SHOULD HAVE GUESSED.
OKAY, YOU TWO, PLAY TIME'S OVER! HANDS OVER YOUR HEADS AN' NO MORE SCREWIN' AROUND!
MOVE IT!
ALL RIGHT, WYATT, WE'LL HAVE TO GO ALONG WITH THEM FOR A BIT. WE'RE WAY TOO HIGH FOR ME TO RISK JUMPING, ESPECIALLY CARRYING YOU.
I... APPRECIATE THAT, JEN.
BUT I STILL WONDER WHAT THESE CLOWNS ARE UP TO.
KEEP MOVING! KEEP MOVING!
WINGFOOT, STAND CLEAR OF SHE-HULK.
OKAY, GREENIE...
STRIP!
SAY WHAT?!?!


YOU HEARD ME. NOW DROP 'EM...
...OR YOU CAN BURY YOUR BOYFRIEND AT WOUNDED KNEE...
SHE-HULK, DON'T! YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS...
...DON'T COUNT FOR MUCH AROUND THESE PARTS, I EXPECT. WELL... I CAN ALWAYS WRITE A NASTY NOTE TO MY CONGRESSMAN LATER.
S'ALL RIGHT, LOVER. NOTHING WORTH YOUR GETTING VENTILATED FOR.
FUNNY THING, THOUGH. I REMEMBER WHEN SHIELD WAS THE GOOD GUYS.
I GUESS THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH PARA-MILITARY SPY GROUPS.
THEY TEND TO START OUT AS THE SECRET SERVICE, AND END UP AS THE K.G.B.
SEEMS LIKE IT'S ALL BEEN DOWNHILL SINCE THEY CANCELED "THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E."
OKAY, BRIGHT-BOYS, NOW WHAT?
MAYBE YOU'D LIKE ME TO JUMP ROPE FOR YOU?

DAD-BURN IT! WHAT TH' HECK'S KEEPIN' DOOLEY?
HE SHOULDA FINISHED PROCESSING THOSE RUNAWAYS TWENTY MINUTES AGO!
THE OTHER CIVILIANS HE COLLARED HAVE ALREADY BEEN CLEARED AN' RETURNED TO THE GROUND.
5730
DOOLEY! WHAT IS ALL THIS? WE AIN'T IN THE HABIT OF PAYIN' FIELD OFFICERS T' STAND AROUND LIKE A BUNCHA OL' GRAN...
...NY...Y...EEE...EEE...EEE...
'EVENING, GRAMPS. I TAKE IT YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THIS STAG PARTY?
DOOLEY!! WHAT THE HELL'S GOIN' ON HERE??
GENERAL ORDER OH-NINER-FIFTY SEVEN, DIRECTOR.
"ALL PRISONERS TO BE STRIP SEARCHED BEFORE BEING CLEARED INTO MINIMUM SECURITY HOLDING AREAS."
NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE SO PLEASED TO ENFORCE A REGULATION.


STRIP SEARCHED?!? YOU GODDAM IDJIT! THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE DONE IN A PRIVATE CELL, BY AN AGENT OF THE SAME SEX!!
I CALL THIS GROSS MIS-USE OF AUTHORITY, DOOLEY. CONFINE YOURSELF TO QUARTERS UNTIL I'VE FILED A REPORT.!
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS, DUGAN. I HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES.
SAVE THE THREATS, DOOLEY. I'VE HEARD WORSE, FROM BETTER MEN THAN YOU, AN' I'M STILL LAUGHIN'.
OKAY... I WANNA SEE TH' SHE-HULK IN MY OFFICE IN TEN MINUTES...
AN' GET THE LADY A SMOCK FER CHRISSAKE!!
I'M SORRY THIS HAPPENED THE WAY IT DID, MA'M.
OUR ORDERS WERE TO PICK YOU UP FOR ANALYSIS, NOT SUBJECT YOU TO THAT KIND OF...OF...
FORGET IT, DIRECTOR. BEING DROOLED OVER BY A BUNCH OF EMOTIONALLY RETARDED LITTLE BOYS IS NOTHING...
...COMPARED TO BEING HI-JACKED--OR SHOULD I MAKE THAT KIDNAPED--BY YOUR PEOPLE.
NOW, WHAT'S THE STORY?
I'M NOT SURE MYSELF, SHE-HULK. IF THEM ORDERS HADN'T COME IN WRITING FROM COLONEL FURY HISSELF I'D NEVER HAVE GONE ALONG WITH IT.
SEEMS, THOUGH, THAT THE TOP BOYS ARE WORRIED YOU MIGHT POSE A POTENTIAL THREAT TO CIVILIAN SAFETY.
THEY WANNA MAKE SURE YOU AIN'T GONNA GO NASTY ON US LIKE THE HULK DID. UNDERSTAND?
I CAN UNDERSTAND THE CONCERN. FELT IT MYSELF, MORE THAN ONCE.
IT'S THE METHODS I HAVE TO QUESTION.
OR DOES SHIELD REALLY CONSIDER ITSELF OUTSIDE THE LAW THESE DAYS?


I JUST DUNNO ANYMORE. SHIELD IS TH' SUPREME HEADQUARTERS INTERNATIONAL ESPIONAGE LAW-ENFORCEMENT DIVISION... LAW-ENFORCEMENT. WHEN I JOINED UP WITH THIS BUNCH I THOUGHT WE WUZ GONNA BE THE LAW, NOT BE ABOVE IT.
BUT TIMES CHANGE. PEOPLE CHANGE. SOMETIMES I STAND IN TH' MIDDLE OF THIS WHOLE SHEE-BANG AN' FEEL LIKE A STRANGER.
LIKE I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ALL ABOUT ANYMORE.
TO DUM DUM
ER... SORRY. F'RGIVE AN' OL' MAN FER RAMBLIN'. YOU GOT TROUBLES OF YOUR OWN. YOU DON'T NEED TO HEAR MINE. I...
'SCUSE ME A MINUTE...
PPPRRT
SPECIAL-DIRECTOR DUGAN.
YES, SIR. I DID FILE A REPORT AGAINST DOOLEY. I...
WHAT?!?
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, SIR?
BUT I... BUT...
YESSIR.
I GUESS DOOLEY REALLY DOES HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES AFTER ALL.
I'VE BEEN ORDERED BACK TO WASHINGTON...
AND I'M IN CHARGE UNTIL FURY RETURNS.

OKAY, PUGAN, YOU'VE GOT THREE MINUTES TO HAUL YOUR FLABBY OLD ASS DOWN TO THE SHUTTLE-BAY.
WINGFOOT--WE'VE PREPARED SPECIAL QUARTERS FOR YOU. WE WANT YOUR GIRLFRIEND TO KNOW WE'RE TAKING PROPER CARE OF YOU...
AND SHE-HULK... YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.
IN HERE, GREENIE. LEVINE, YOU SET UP AND READY YET?
READY AS I'LL EVER BE. YOU KNOW THIS KIND OF EXAMINATION ISN'T STRICTLY MY FIELD...
THEN YOU'D BETTER BE EXTRA CAREFUL--AND EXTRA THOROUGH.
OKAY, SHE-HULK. ONE MORE TIME. OFF WITH THOSE CLOTHES.
YOUR ONE-TRACK MIND IS GETTING TO BE A BORE, DOOLEY.
ER... GULP!... LISSEN, THAT REALLY ISN'T NECESSARY...
AND I SAY IT IS, GAFFER, ME OL' MATE.
AND AS OF NOW WE'RE PLAYING THIS GAME BY MY RULES.
ALL RIGHT...
IT'S NOW NINE FORTY-SEVEN. GET STARTED!

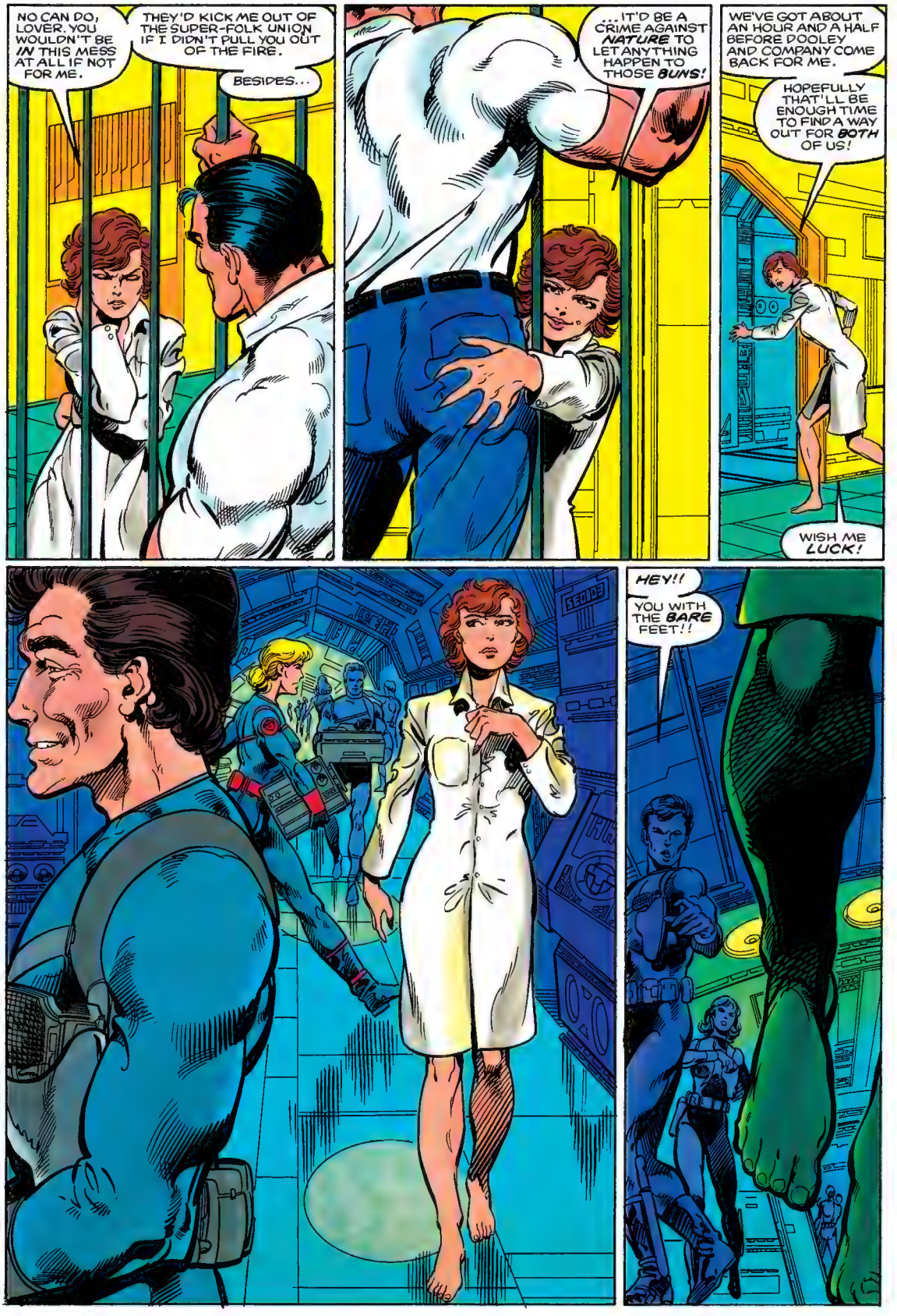
JEN!
AM 3:17
YOU MISERABLE BASTARDS!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?
JUST STAND CLEAR OF THE DOOR, WINGFOOT, UNLESS YOU WANT SOME OF THE SAME.
OKAY, BOYS, TOSS 'ER IN WITH GERONIMO.
WHEN SHE WAKES UP, WINGFOOT, TELL 'ER SHE'S GOT TWO HOURS TO REST UP.
THEN WE START AGAIN.
JEN...
JEN, CAN YOU HEAR ME? BABY, WHAT HAVE THEY...
UHHHRH...
WYATT...?

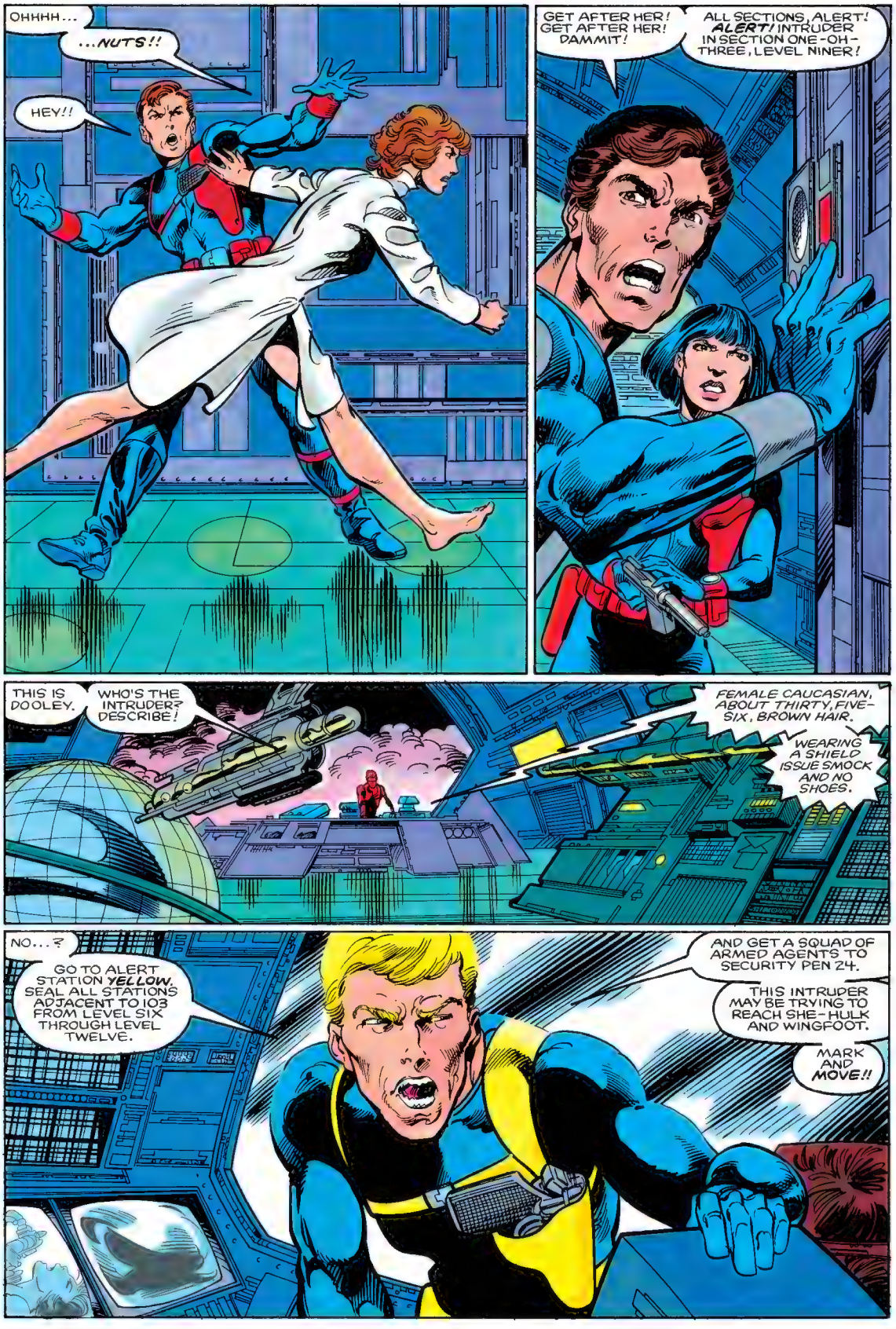
EASY, BABE, EASY. DON'T TALK. SAVE YOUR STRENGTH.
S'ALL RIGHT...
S'NOT AS BAD AS IT LOOKS. I'M JUST WORN OUT. FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN THROUGH...
THROUGH...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN THROUGH.
HERE. TAKE A SIP OF COFFEE. IT'S NOT EXACTLY HOT ANYMORE, BUT THE CAFFEINE MAY BOOST YOUR ENERGY.
MMMMM, THANKS.
THAT WAS REALLY SOMETHING ELSE. I'VE BEEN POKED AND PRODDED AND PROBED IN PLACES I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I HAD!
WHY DIDN'T YOU RESIST THEM?
BECAUSE OF YOU, SWEETIE.
AS LONG AS THEY'VE GOT YOU I'M GONNA PLAY NICE...EVEN IF IT KILLS ME!
WHAT ABOUT YOU? HAVE YOU TRIED TO BUST OUT OF THIS CAGE AT ALL?
NOT MUCH CHANCE OF THAT, I'M AFRAID. THESE BARS ARE TOO CLOSE TOGETHER FOR ME TO SQUEEZE THROUGH...
...AND TOO STRONG FOR ME TO BEND. PLUS THERE'S A WEIGHT-SENSITIVE ALARM SYSTEM.
IF THE WEIGHT IN THIS CAGE VARIES BY MORE THAN ONE OR TWO POUNDS THIS ROOM FLOODS WITH CYANIDE GAS.
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THEY TOLD ME, AND THAT GIZMO ON THE WALL TENDS TO LEND CREDENCE TO THEIR CLAIMS.
945

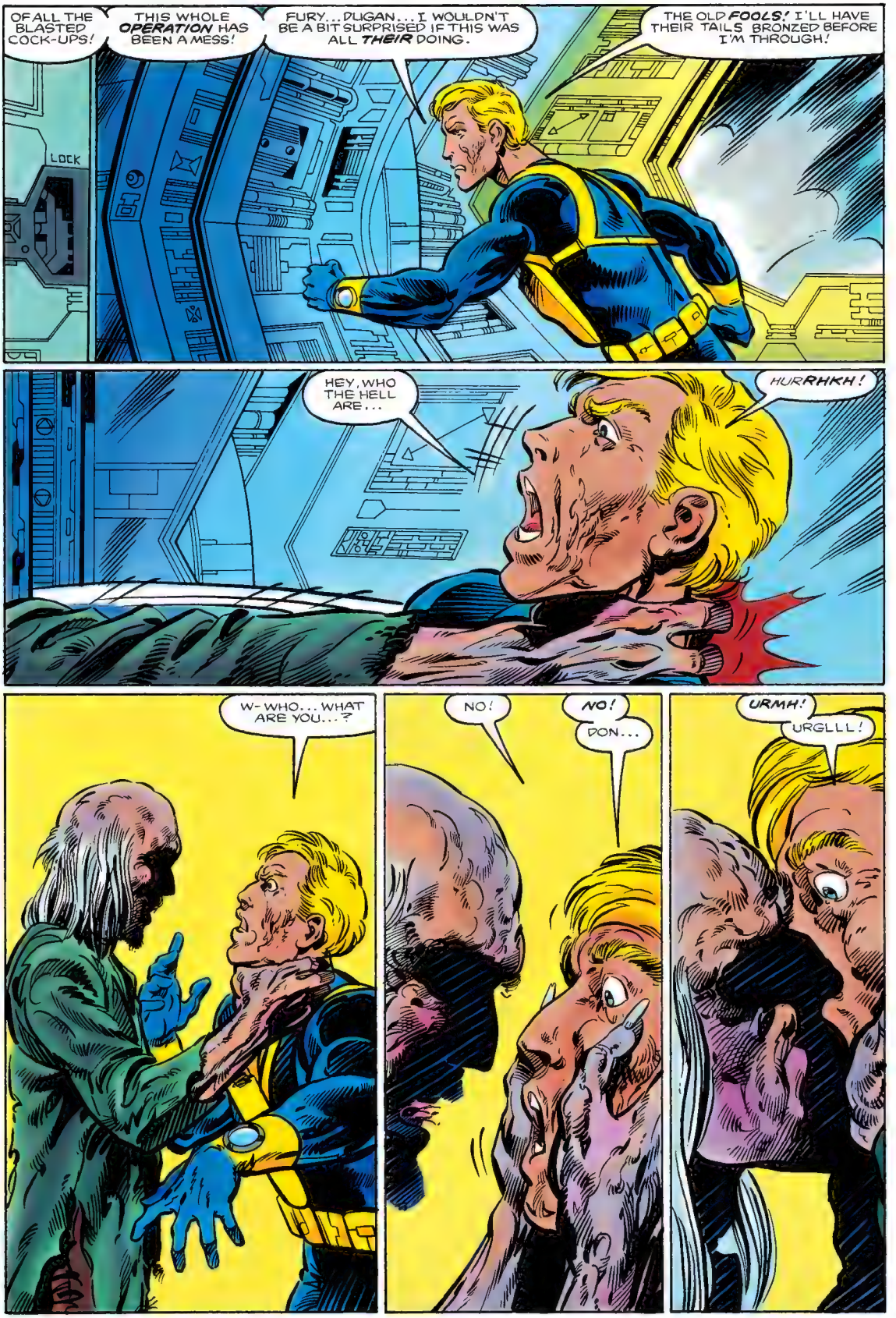
WELL, THAT SUCKS.
AND THESE BARS FEEL LIKE SOME DISTANT COUSIN TO ADAMANTIUM. PROBABLY TOO TOUGH FOR ME, EVEN IF I WASN'T SHAGGED OUT.
BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, WHILE THE TWO OF US ARE STILL TOGETHER-- AND BEFORE THE GOON SQUAD COMES BACK.
HMMM... WYATT, D'YOU THINK YOU COULD PRESS THE EQUIVALENT OF MY WEIGHT?
ER... WELL, I'M NOT EXACTLY A NINETY-EIGHT POUND WEAKLING TO BE SURE...
...BUT SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS?
HUSH UP, BLABBER-MOUTH! DIDN'T YOUR MAMA EVER TELL YOU IT ISN'T POLITE TO REVEAL A GAL'S MOST INTIMATE SECRETS?
NOW... CLIMB UP ON HERE AND BRACE YOURSELF AGAINST THE CEILING...
JEN, WHAT IN THE WORLD...?
OH! OH, OF COURSE! I UNDERSTAND.
READY WHEN YOU ARE.
OKAY, I'LL TRY AND TAKE THIS SLOW AND EASY.
LET'S HOPE THERE AREN'T ANY HIDDEN CAMERAS WE'VE OVERLOOKED.
THESE BARS ARE TOO CLOSE TOGETHER FOR THE SHE-HULK...

BUT I HAVE ONE ACE UP MY SLEEVE THAT THESE BOZOS PROBABLY HAVEN'T CONSIDERED.
I GOT TURNED INTO THE SHE-HULK BY A BLOOD TRANSFUSION FROM MY COUSIN BRUCE...
...AND THAT GAVE ME A DOSE OF THE GAMMA RADIATION THAT TURNS HIM INTO THE HULK.
BUT IT GAVE ME SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING BRUCE DIDN'T HAVE.
I'M SHE-HULK BY CHOICE. AND ANY TIME I FEEL LIKE IT I CAN STOP BEING THE SHE-HULK...
...AND BE PLAIN OL' JENNIFER WALTERS AGAIN!
AND NOW SQUEEZING THROUGH THESE BARS IS NO PROBLEM AT ALL!
NO ALARMS EITHER. I THINK MY FIENDISH PLAN IS WORKING!
BUT...NOT...FOR LONG IF YOU DON'T... FIND THE OFF SWITCH... TO THAT SCALE.
I'M...PUSHING HARD ENOUGH TO... BREAK MY BACK MAINTAINING THE WEIGHT OF BOTH... OF US.

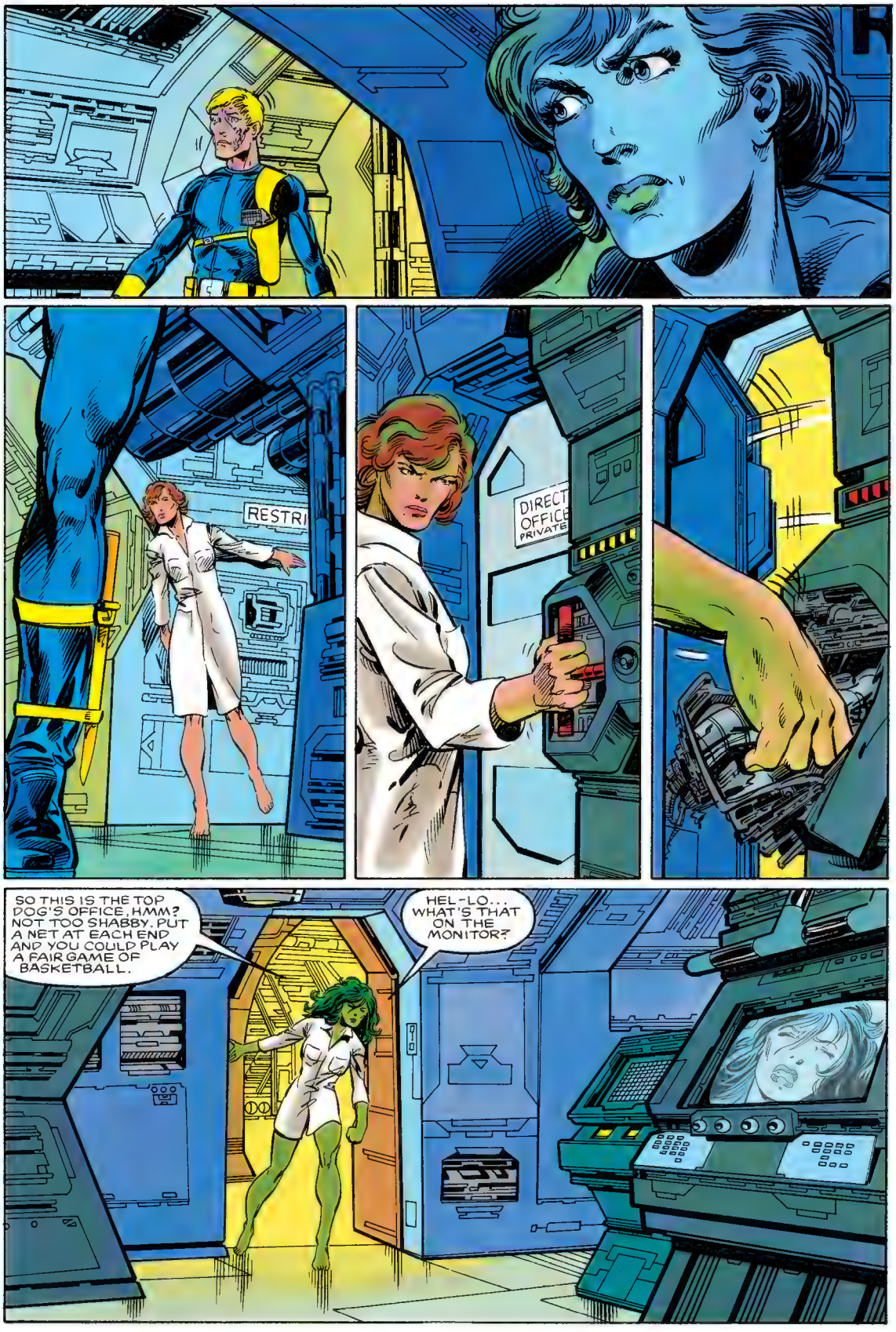
BE BRAVE, MY BRAVE. THIS'LL TAKE A MOMENT OR TWO.
I'M AFRAID NONE OF THESE BUTTONS ARE LABELLED FOR FUNCTION.
944
BUT THERE'S ONLY THREE OF 'EM, SO THERE MUST BE SOME LOGIC TO IT.
"ON" WOULD BE ONE, "OFF" WOULD BE ANOTHER. THE THIRD PROBABLY SETS THE DESIRED WEIGHT.
SO... IT WOULDN'T BE "ON-OFF-SET", WOULD IT? IT'D BE "ON... SET...
"...OFF!"
TEK
SUNNUVAGUN! WE AREN'T DEAD! I GUESS THERE ARE ADVANTAGES TO THINKING LIKE A LAWYER.
GOOD WORK, JEN!
NOW, HOW CAN WE GET ME OUT OF HERE?
OH, DRAT! I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT!
I COULDN'T BEND THESE BARS FROM THE INSIDE, SO I CAN'T DO IT NOW, EITHER.
HMM. THAT LEAVES US CLOSE TO BEING BACK WHERE WE STARTED.
I THINK YOU'D BETTER START DOING WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, AND STOP WORRYING ABOUT ME.


NO CAN DO, LOVER. YOU WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MESS AT ALL IF NOT FOR ME.
THEY'D KICK ME OUT OF THE SUPER-FOLK UNION IF I DIDN'T PULL YOU OUT OF THE FIRE.
BESIDES...
...IT'D BE A CRIME AGAINST NATURE TO LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO THOSE BUNS!
WE'VE GOT ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF BEFORE DOOLEY AND COMPANY COME BACK FOR ME.
HOPEFULLY THAT'LL BE ENOUGH TIME TO FIND A WAY OUT FOR BOTH OF US!
WISH ME LUCK!
HEY!!
YOU WITH THE BARE FEET!!

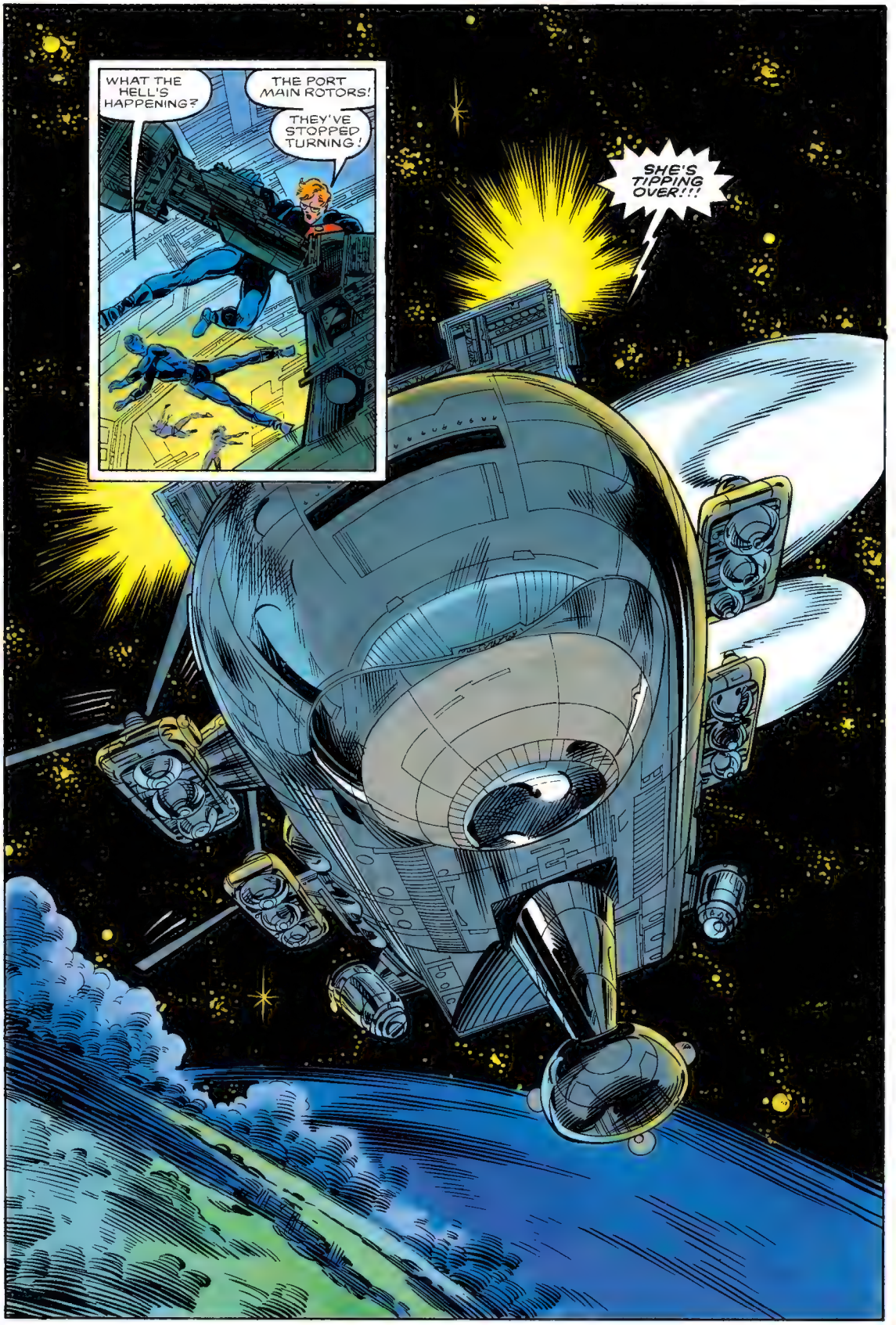

OHHHH...
...NUTS!!
HEY!!
GET AFTER HER! GET AFTER HER! DAMMIT!
ALL SECTIONS, ALERT! ALERT! INTRUDER IN SECTION ONE-OH-THREE, LEVEL NINER!
THIS IS DOOLEY.
WHO'S THE INTRUDER? DESCRIBE!
FEMALE CAUCASIAN, ABOUT THIRTY, FIVE-SIX, BROWN HAIR.
WEARING A SHIELD ISSUE SMOCK AND NO SHOES.
NO...?
GO TO ALERT STATION YELLOW. SEAL ALL STATIONS ADJACENT TO 103 FROM LEVEL SIX THROUGH LEVEL TWELVE.
AND GET A SQUAD OF ARMED AGENTS TO SECURITY PEN 24.
THIS INTRUDER MAY BE TRYING TO REACH SHE-HULK AND WINGFOOT.
MARK AND MOVE!!


OF ALL THE BLASTED COCK-UPS!
THIS WHOLE OPERATION HAS BEEN A MESS!
FURY... DUGAN... I WOULDN'T BE A BIT SURPRISED IF THIS WAS ALL THEIR DOING.
THE OLD FOOLS! I'LL HAVE THEIR TAILS BRONZED BEFORE I'M THROUGH!
LOCK
HEY, WHO THE HELL ARE...
HURRHKH!
W- WHO... WHAT ARE YOU...?
NO!
NO!
DON...
URMH!
URGLLL!

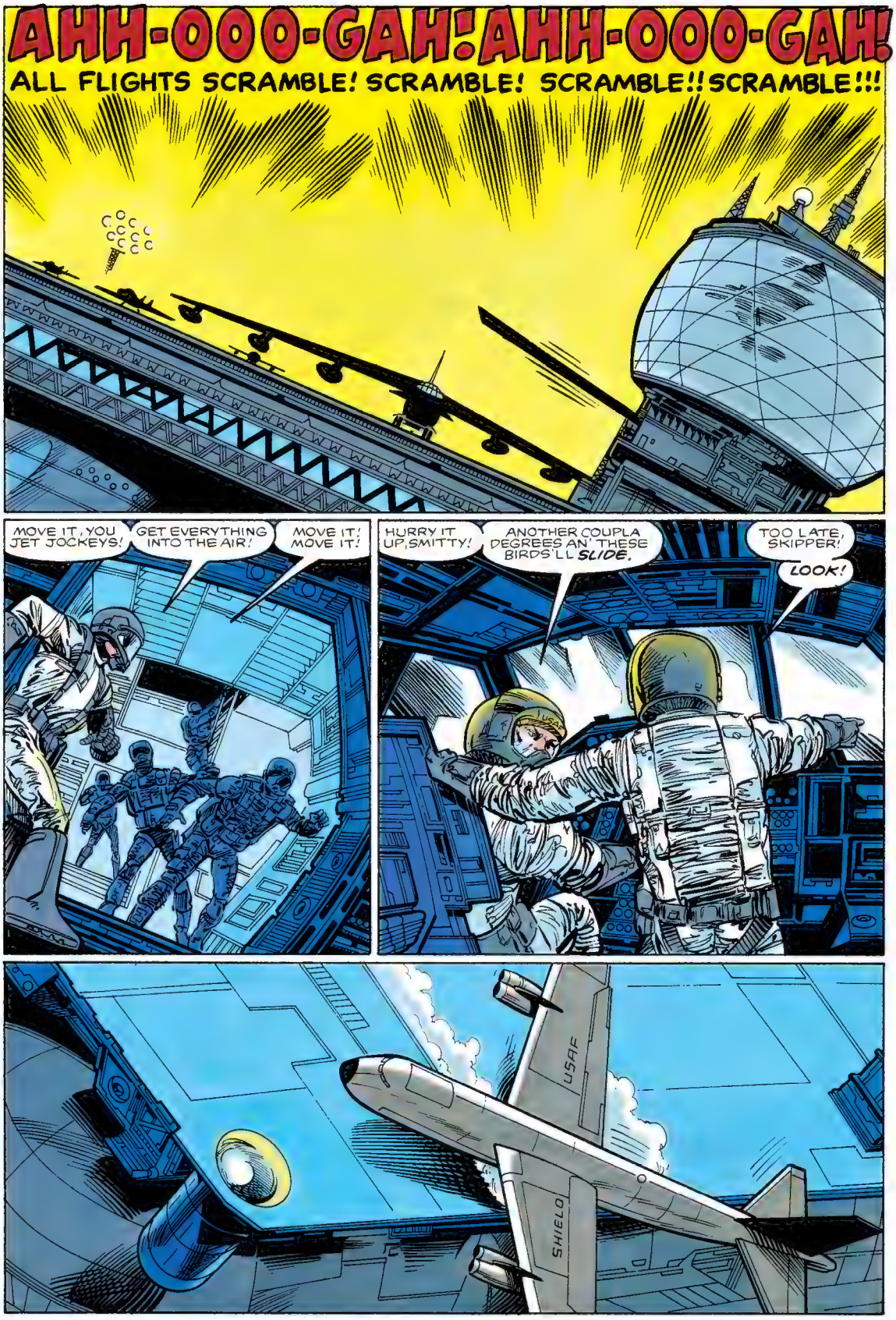
HEAR US, HUMAN. DO NOT RESIST. WE CONTROL YOU NOW. OUR THOUGHTS ARE YOUR THOUGHTS.
YOU ARE DEAD, HUMAN. WITHOUT US YOU HAVE NO LIFE, NO THOUGHT.
YOU WILL OBEY.
YOU WILL TAKE US TO THE CENTRAL CONTROL ROOM OF THIS AIRSHIP.
YOUR MEMORIES WILL GUIDE US. YOUR KNOWLEDGE WILL TEACH US WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW...
...THAT WE MAY DESTROY THIS HUMAN ENGINE, AND THUS SHOW THE WORLD OUR POWER!


RESTRI
DIRECT
OFFICE
PRIVATE
SO THIS IS THE TOP DOG'S OFFICE, HMM? NOT TOO SHABBY. PUT A NET AT EACH END AND YOU COULD PLAY A FAIR GAME OF BASKETBALL.
HEL-LO... WHAT'S THAT ON THE MONITOR?

OH, MARVELOUS! HE'S BEEN WATCHING TAPES OF MY "EXAMINATION".
EEE-UK!
CREEPS LIKE HIM COULD GIVE *PERVERTS* A BAD NAME.
WELL, THIS CONSOLE LOOKS EASY ENOUGH TO OPERATE, SO I THINK I'LL JUST POP THE TAPE...
AND PUT THE SPOILERS ON ONAN THE BARBARIAN RIGHT HERE AND...
KRKLK
WHAT THE HELL?!?!


WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPENING?
THE PORT MAIN ROTORS!
THEY'VE STOPPED TURNING!
SHE'S TIPPING OVER!!!

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THERE'S BEEN NO POWER LOSS!
BUT IT'S HAPPENING! SOMEBODY MUST HAVE SHUT DOWN THE ROTORS DELIBERATELY!
WHO IN GOD'S NAME WOULD BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO...?
THE PRISONERS!
CHECK THE PRISONERS!
SHE ESCAPED?! DAMN AND BLAST IT ALL. DOOLEY MUST'VE BEEN RIGHT!
SHE IS HOSTILE!
WING-FOOT'S STILL IN THE HOLDING PEN. BUT I DON'T SEE ANY SIGN OF THE SHE-HULK!
SOUND RED ALERT!
SHE-HULK IS TO BE LOCATED AND NEUTRALIZED.
SHOOT TO KILL!


AHH-OOO-GAH! AHH-OOO-GAH!
ALL FLIGHTS SCRAMBLE! SCRAMBLE! SCRAMBLE!! SCRAMBLE!!!
MOVE IT, YOU JET JOCKEYS!
GET EVERYTHING INTO THE AIR!
MOVE IT! MOVE IT!
HURRY IT UP, SMITTY!
ANOTHER COUPLA DEGREES AN' THESE BIRDS'LL SLIDE.
TOO LATE, SKIPPER!
LOOK!
USAF
SHIELD

TIME TO MAKE THE DOUGHNUTS.
Sir Do-Nut
807
Si
Do
N

OL-NINER! YOU'RE GOING OVER THE EDGE! EJECT!
EJECT!
I'M GONNA SAVE THIS BABY...
NEGATIVE, NEGATIVE.

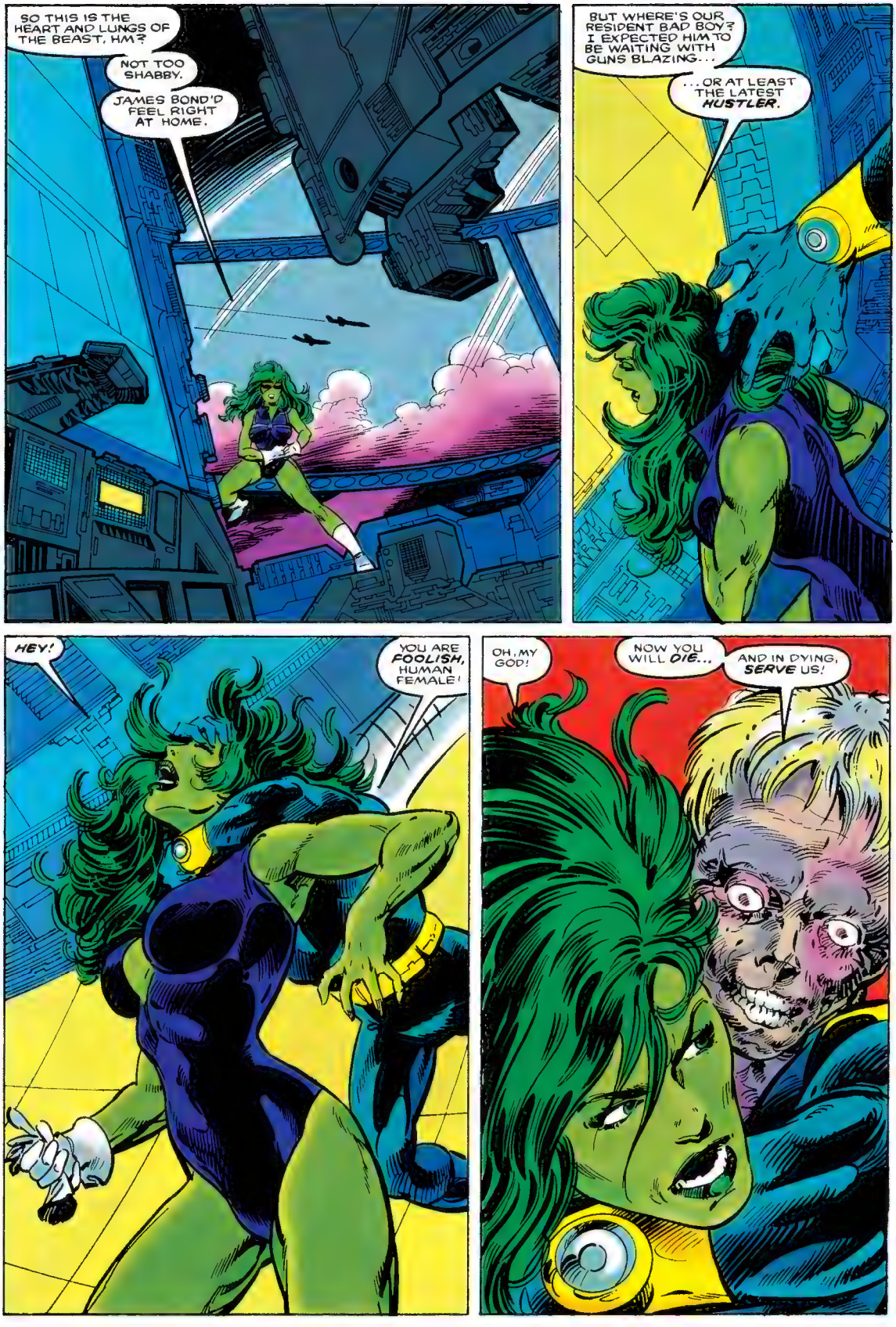
DOESN'T.. LOOK AS IF THIS CRAZY ROLLER-COASTER IS GONNA LET UP.
BETTER SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT...
THOUGH I CAN'T IMAGINE...
...WHAT?!?
OHH... ICK! WHAT THE HECK IS THIS THING?
LOOKS--AND SMELLS--LIKE IT'S BEEN DEAD ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS.
AN' YOU'RE GONNA JOIN 'IM.
RIGHT NOW!
HUH?
HEY, WAIT'A MIN...

WAIT!
DON'T!!
PUM
PUM
PUM
PUM
OOHHH JEEZ... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
SHE-HULK WASN'T RESPONSIBLE!
IT'S DOOLEY!
WHAT?!?
YOU HEARD THE LADY, COWBOY!
ISN'T IT LUCKY I'M DAMN NEAR BULLET-PROOF?
NOW WHAT'S THAT ABOUT EL-CREEP-O?

HE--HE CAME INTO THE MASTER CONTROL CENTER. ORDERED EVERYONE OUT.
WE KNEW HE'D BEEN PUT IN CHARGE, SO WE OBEYED.
THEN ALL THIS STARTED?
H M. I SAW HIM LEAVE HIS OFFICE A WHILE AGO.
I THOUGHT SOMETHING LOOKED WRONG--EVEN FOR HIM.
I'M BEGINNING TO SMELL A VERY LARGE RAT. AND I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
BUT NOT DRESSED LIKE THIS! GET ME SOMETHING I CAN WEAR...
"...THEN WE'LL PAY A VISIT ON MISTER DOOLEY."
YOU MEN, REPORT STATUS!
SHE-HULK!
WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE?

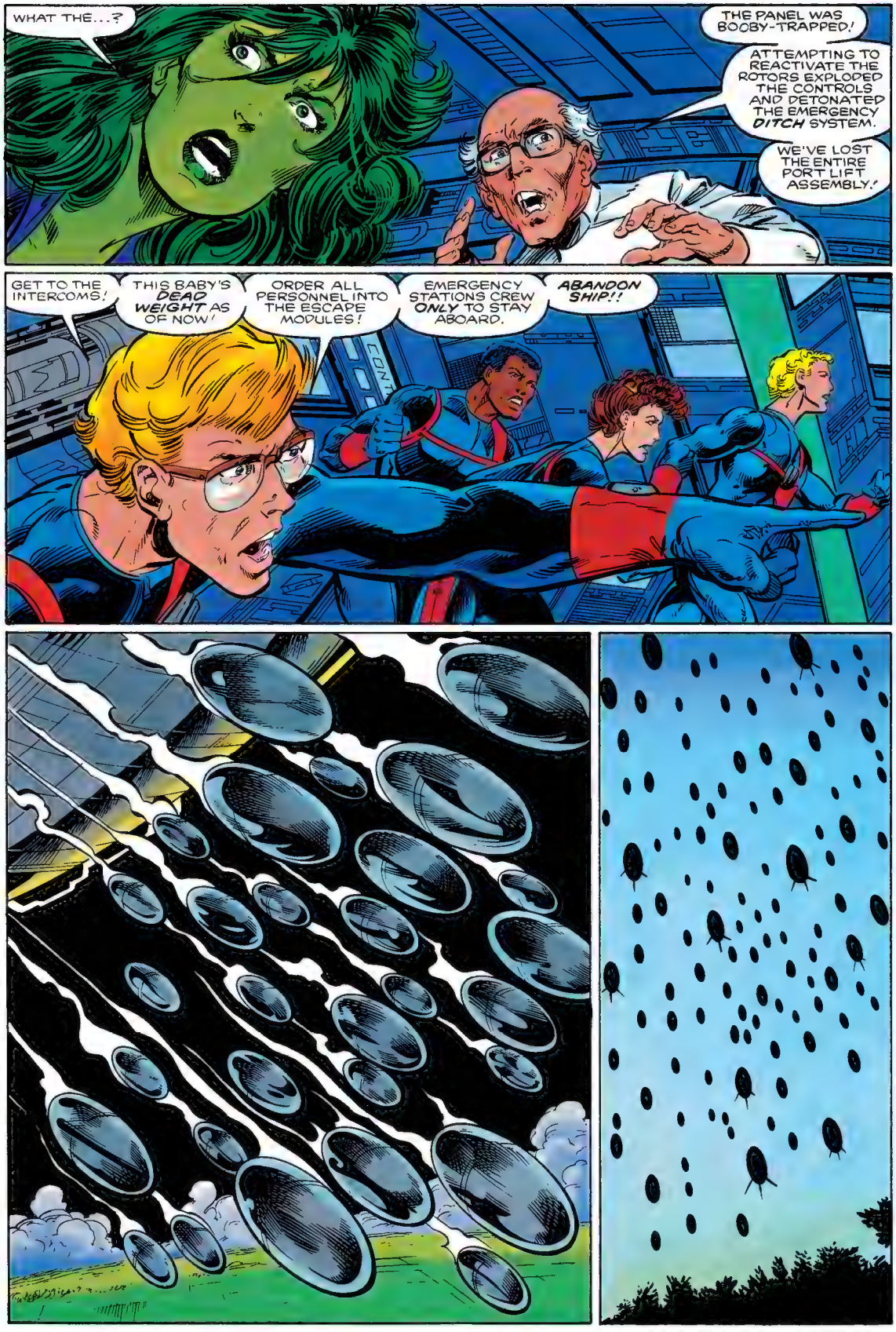
HOLD YOUR FIRE!! SHE-HULK IS ON OUR SIDE!
WELL, NOW, I WOULDN'T GO QUITE THAT FAR... BUT I AM ANTI-POOLEY.
HE'S IN THERE...?
WHAT ABOUT THIS SECURITY DOOR? I SUPPOSE THERE'S A REASON I SHOULDNT JUST RIP IT OPEN?
A COUPLE GOOD ONES!
GAFFER...?
THAT'S THE SINGLE MOST SECURE ACCESS IN THE WHOLE SYSTEM, SHE-HULK.
RIP IT OPEN AND THIS AREA WILL SEAL AND FLOOD WITH HK-357 THE MOST TOXIC NERVE GAS MANUFACTURED.
YOU DON'T WANT UNAUTHORIZED BAD GUYS BUSTING INTO YOUR NERVE CENTER.
BUT THAT'S INTERNAL DEFENSES.
WHAT ABOUT OUTSIDE?

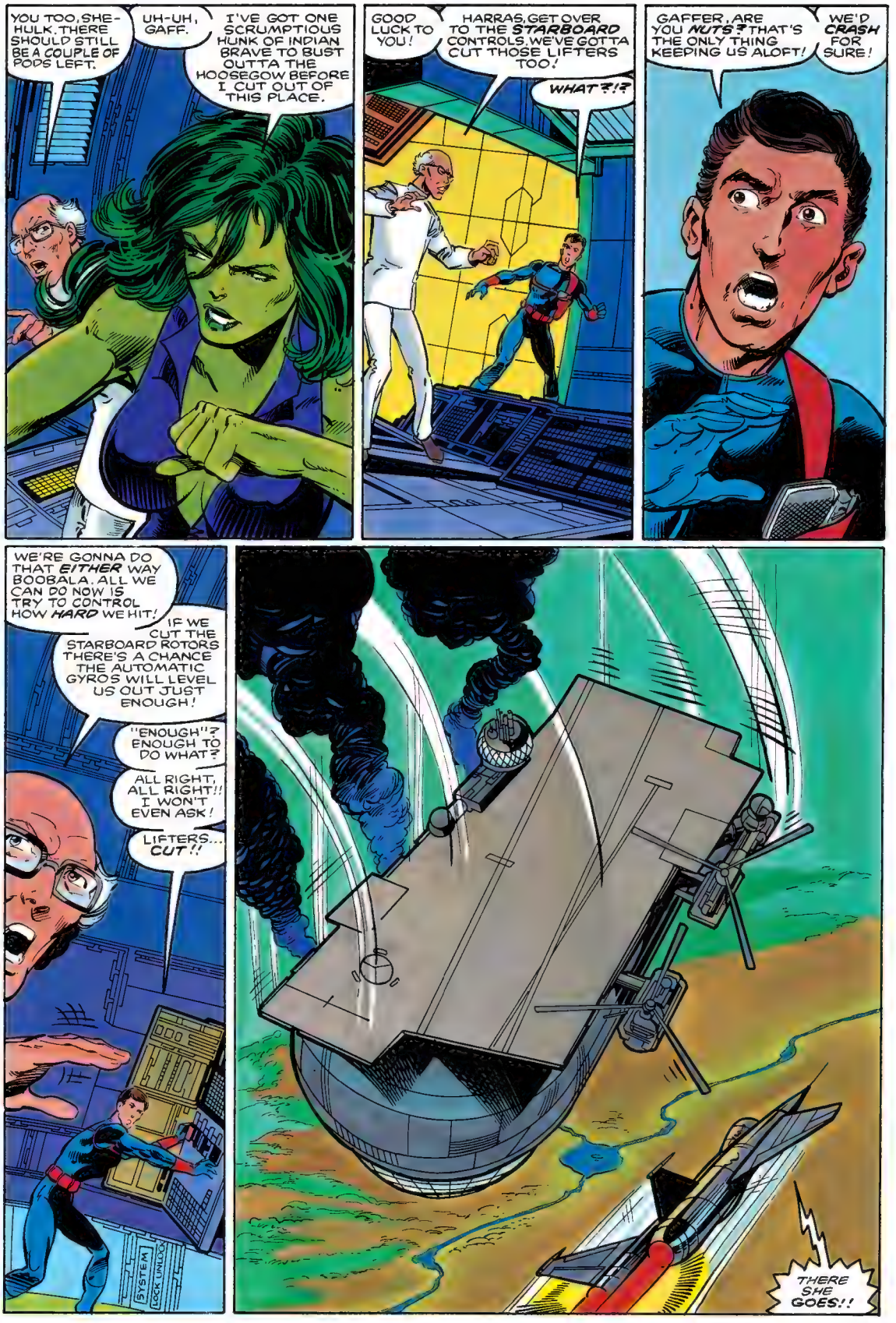
BE CAREFUL NOW, SHE-HULK. THERE'S NO WAY TO GUARANTEE STABILITY.
TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW, GAFF. THE WAY THIS BIG BIRD'S TWIRLING IT'S GOT GREAT ADVENTURE BEAT ALL HOLLOW!
IT'S NO GAME, LADY! AT THIS ANGLE THE VERTICAL LIFTERS ARE ACTING LIKE DIRECTIONAL PROPELLORS.
WE'RE SLEWING SIDEWAYS AT BETTER THAN FIFTY KNOTS.
ONE UN-EXPECTED THERMAL AND YOU COULD GET SNATCHED UP...
...AND TOSSED INTO THE BLADES!
YUM-YUM! DICED SHE-HULK! MY FAVORITE!
THANKS FOR THE WARNING. I'LL KEEP THIS QUICK!
OKAY, BIG TALKER... THERE'S THE COMMAND CENTER.
YOU'VE ONLY GOT ONE CHANCE AT THIS. MAKE IT...
...WORK!!
SMASH
SMASH

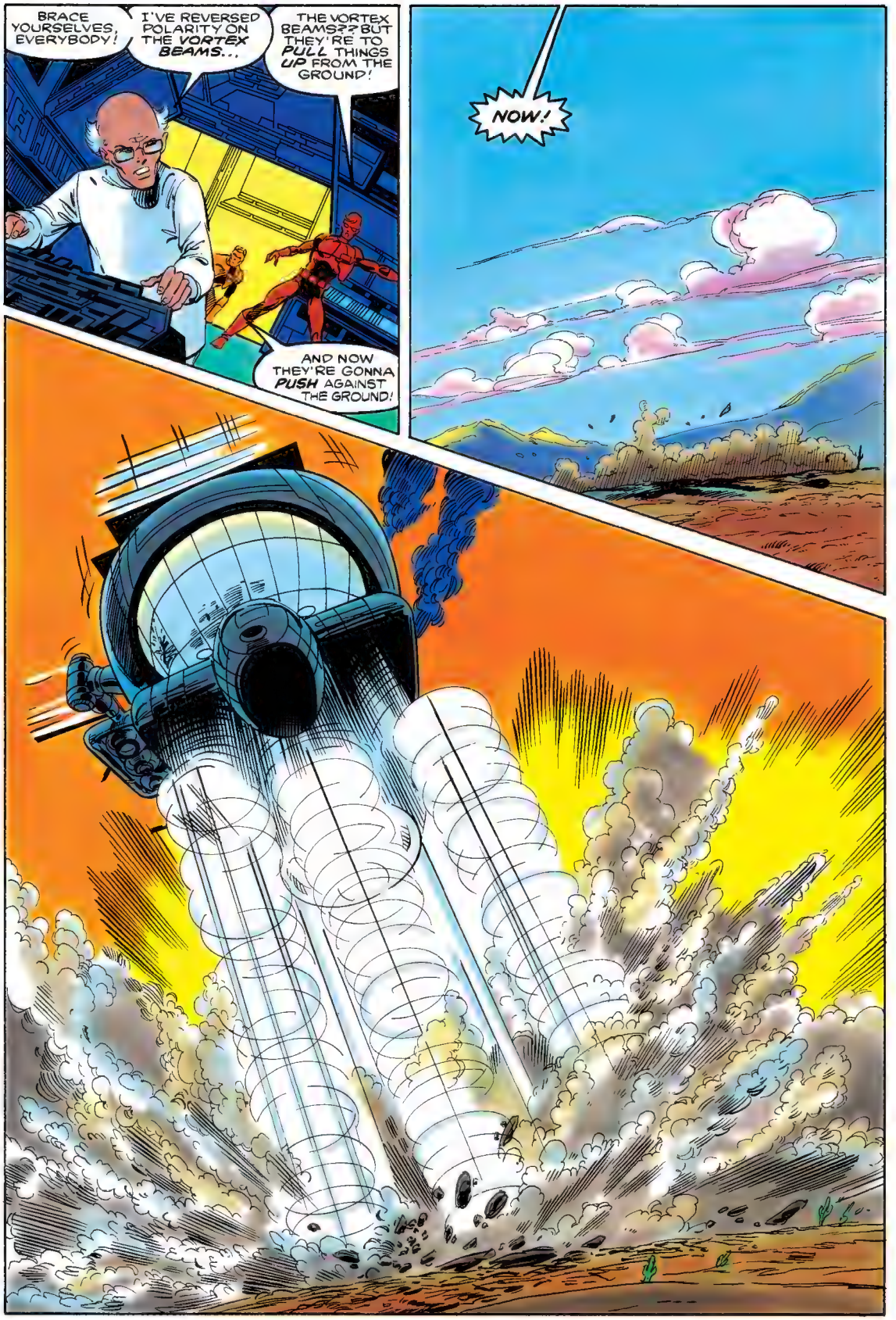

SO THIS IS THE HEART AND LUNGS OF THE BEAST, HM?
NOT TOO SHABBY.
JAMES BOND'D FEEL RIGHT AT HOME.
BUT WHERE'S OUR RESIDENT BAD BOY? I EXPECTED HIM TO BE WAITING WITH GUNS BLAZING...
...OR AT LEAST THE LATEST HUSTLER.
HEY!
YOU ARE FOOLISH, HUMAN FEMALE!
OH, MY GOD!
NOW YOU WILL DIE...
AND IN DYING, SERVE US!

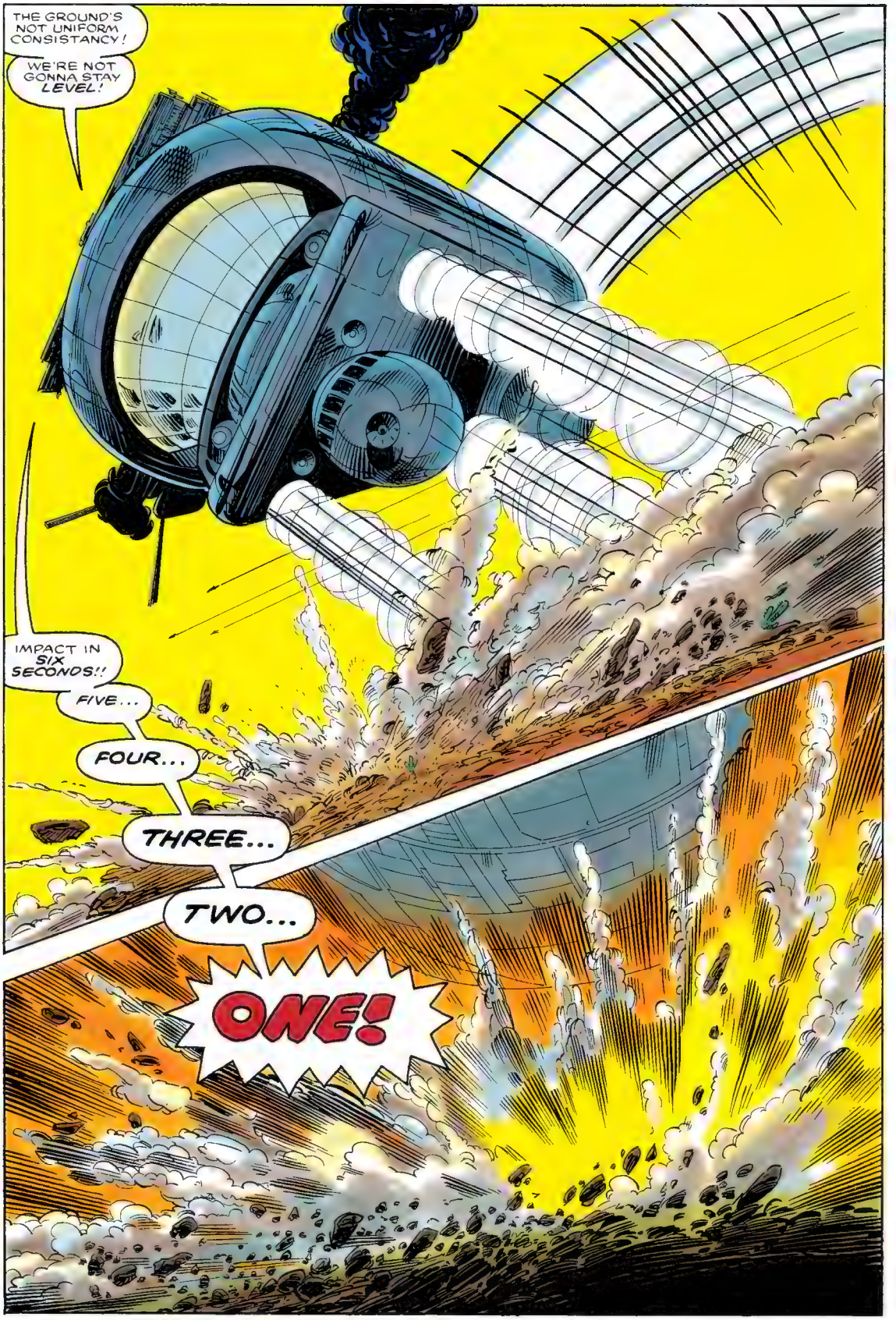
WE HAVE HAD MANY HOSTS SINCE THE FIRST, THE ONE CALLED CAMPBELL.
THAT WAS LONG AGO-- SO LONG...
BUT NEVER HAVE WE HAD A BODY SUCH AS YOURS SO STRONG, SO LUSH.
SO FULL OF THE JUICES OF LIFE...
YOU WILL SERVE US WELL
AND FOR A LONG TIME...
STOP IT! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU...
OH, NO!
YOU'RE... FULL OF...
...OF...
...COCKROACHES!!!

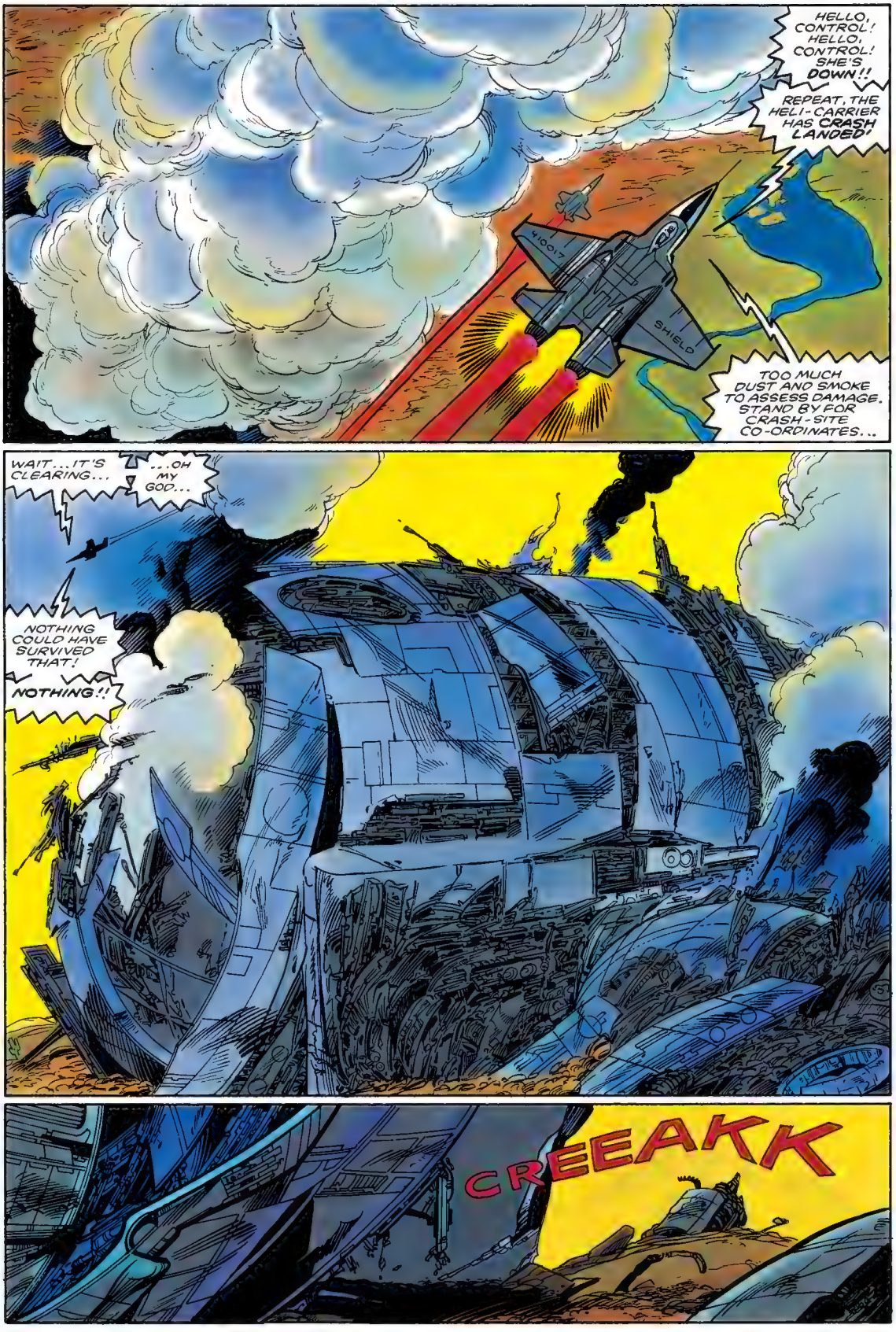
HE... HE WAS SOME KIND OF... COLONY OF SUPER-INTELLIGENT COCKROACHES...!?!?
CAN THAT BE?!?!
FACE IT, JENNY-POO! ANY WORLD THAT HAS YOU IN IT HAS LOTS OF ROOM FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE!
SO QUIT GAWKING AND GET THESE DARN DOORS OPEN... THERE!
ALL YOURS, GUYS!
GOOD WORK, SHE-HULK!
MORELLI! MACKIE!
GET THE PORT ROTORS RUNNING AGAIN--FAST!
WILL DO, GA--

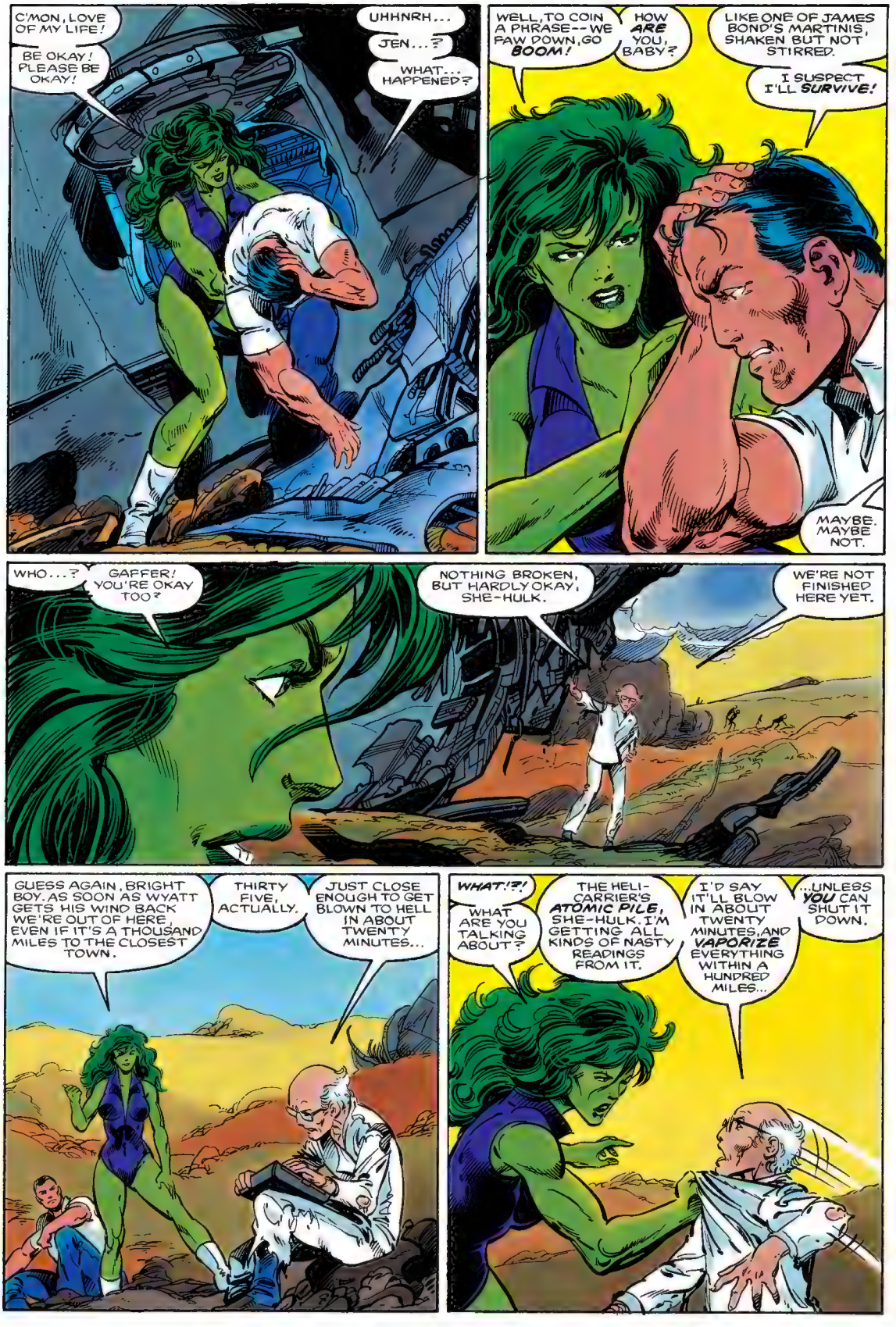

WHAT THE...?
THE PANEL WAS BOOBY-TRAPPED!
ATTEMPTING TO REACTIVATE THE ROTORS EXPLODED THE CONTROLS AND DETONATED THE EMERGENCY DITCH SYSTEM.
WE'VE LOST THE ENTIRE PORT LIFT ASSEMBLY!
GET TO THE INTERCOMS!
THIS BABY'S DEAD WEIGHT AS OF NOW!
ORDER ALL PERSONNEL INTO THE ESCAPE MODULES!
EMERGENCY STATIONS CREW ONLY TO STAY ABOARD.
ABANDON SHIP!!
CONT


YOU TOO, SHE-HULK. THERE SHOULD STILL BE A COUPLE OF PODS LEFT.
UH-UH, GAFF.
I'VE GOT ONE SCRUMPTIOUS HUNK OF INDIAN BRAVE TO BUST OUTTA THE HOOSEGOW BEFORE I CUT OUT OF THIS PLACE.
GOOD LUCK TO YOU!
HARRAS, GET OVER TO THE STARBOARD CONTROLS. WE'VE GOTTA CUT THOSE LIFTERS TOO!
WHAT?!?
GAFFER, ARE YOU NUTS? THAT'S THE ONLY THING KEEPING US ALOFT!
WE'D CRASH FOR SURE!
WE'RE GONNA DO THAT EITHER WAY BOOBALA. ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS TRY TO CONTROL HOW HARD WE HIT!
IF WE CUT THE STARBOARD ROTORS THERE'S A CHANCE THE AUTOMATIC GYROS WILL LEVEL US OUT JUST ENOUGH!
"ENOUGH"? ENOUGH TO DO WHAT?
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!! I WON'T EVEN ASK!
LIFTERS... CUT!!
SYSTEM LOCK LINUS
THERE SHE GOES!!


BRACE YOURSELVES, EVERYBODY!
I'VE REVERSED POLARITY ON THE VORTEX BEAMS...
THE VORTEX BEAMS?? BUT THEY'RE TO PULL THINGS UP FROM THE GROUND!
AND NOW THEY'RE GONNA PUSH AGAINST THE GROUND!
NOW!


THE GROUND'S NOT UNIFORM CONSISTANCY!
WE'RE NOT GONNA STAY LEVEL!
IMPACT IN SIX SECONDS!!
FIVE...
FOUR...
THREE...
TWO...
ONE!

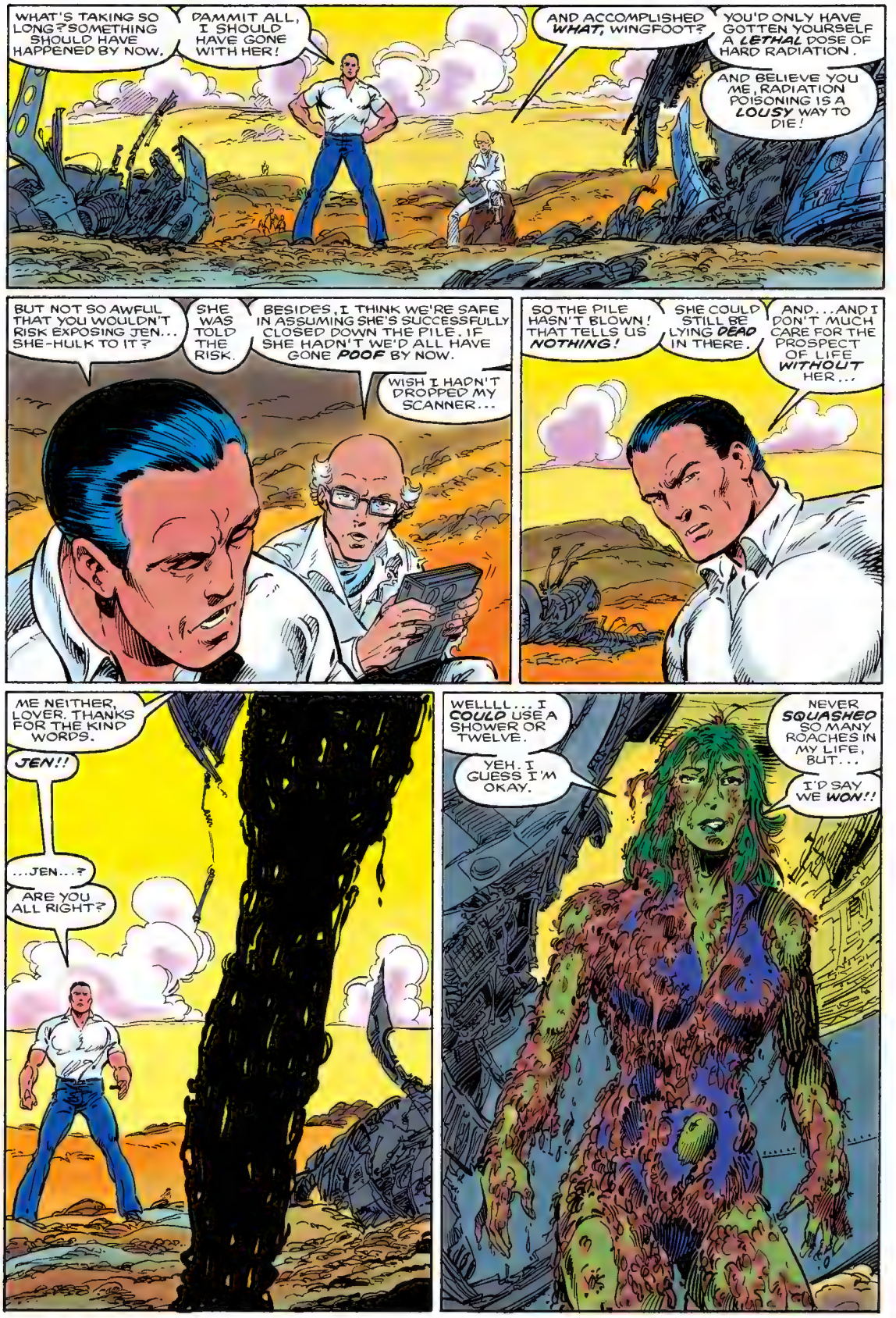

HELLO, CONTROL! HELLO, CONTROL! SHE'S DOWN!!
REPEAT, THE HELI-CARRIER HAS CRASH LANDED!
SHIELD
TOO MUCH DUST AND SMOKE TO ASSESS DAMAGE. STAND BY FOR CRASH-SITE CO-ORDINATES...
WAIT... IT'S CLEARING...
...OH MY GOD...
NOTHING COULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT!
NOTHING!!
CREEAKK

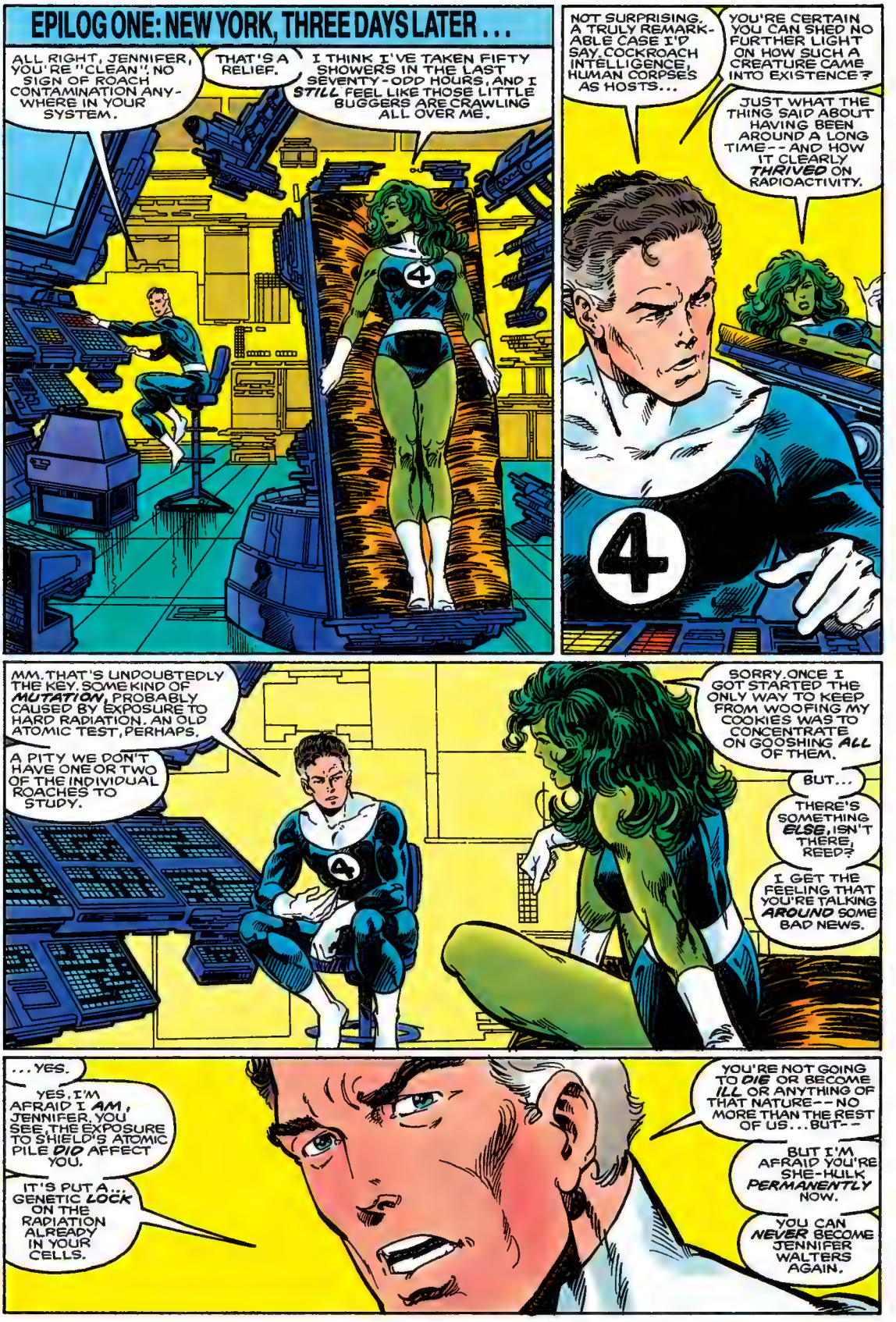

C'MON, LOVE OF MY LIFE!
BE OKAY! PLEASE BE OKAY!
UHHNRH...
JEN...?
WHAT... HAPPENED?
WELL, TO COIN A PHRASE--WE PAW DOWN, GO BOOM!
HOW ARE YOU, BABY?
LIKE ONE OF JAMES BOND'S MARTINIS, SHAKEN BUT NOT STIRRED.
I SUSPECT I'LL SURVIVE!
MAYBE. MAYBE NOT.
WHO...?
GAFFER! YOU'RE OKAY TOO?
NOTHING BROKEN, BUT HARDLY OKAY, SHE-HULK.
WE'RE NOT FINISHED HERE YET.
GUESS AGAIN, BRIGHT BOY. AS SOON AS WYATT GETS HIS WIND BACK WE'RE OUT OF HERE, EVEN IF IT'S A THOUSAND MILES TO THE CLOSEST TOWN.
THIRTY FIVE, ACTUALLY.
JUST CLOSE ENOUGH TO GET BLOWN TO HELL IN ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES...
WHAT!?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THE HELI-CARRIER'S ATOMIC PILE, SHE-HULK. I'M GETTING ALL KINDS OF NASTY READINGS FROM IT.
I'D SAY IT'LL BLOW IN ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES, AND VAPORIZE EVERYTHING WITHIN A HUNDRED MILES...
...UNLESS YOU CAN SHUT IT DOWN.

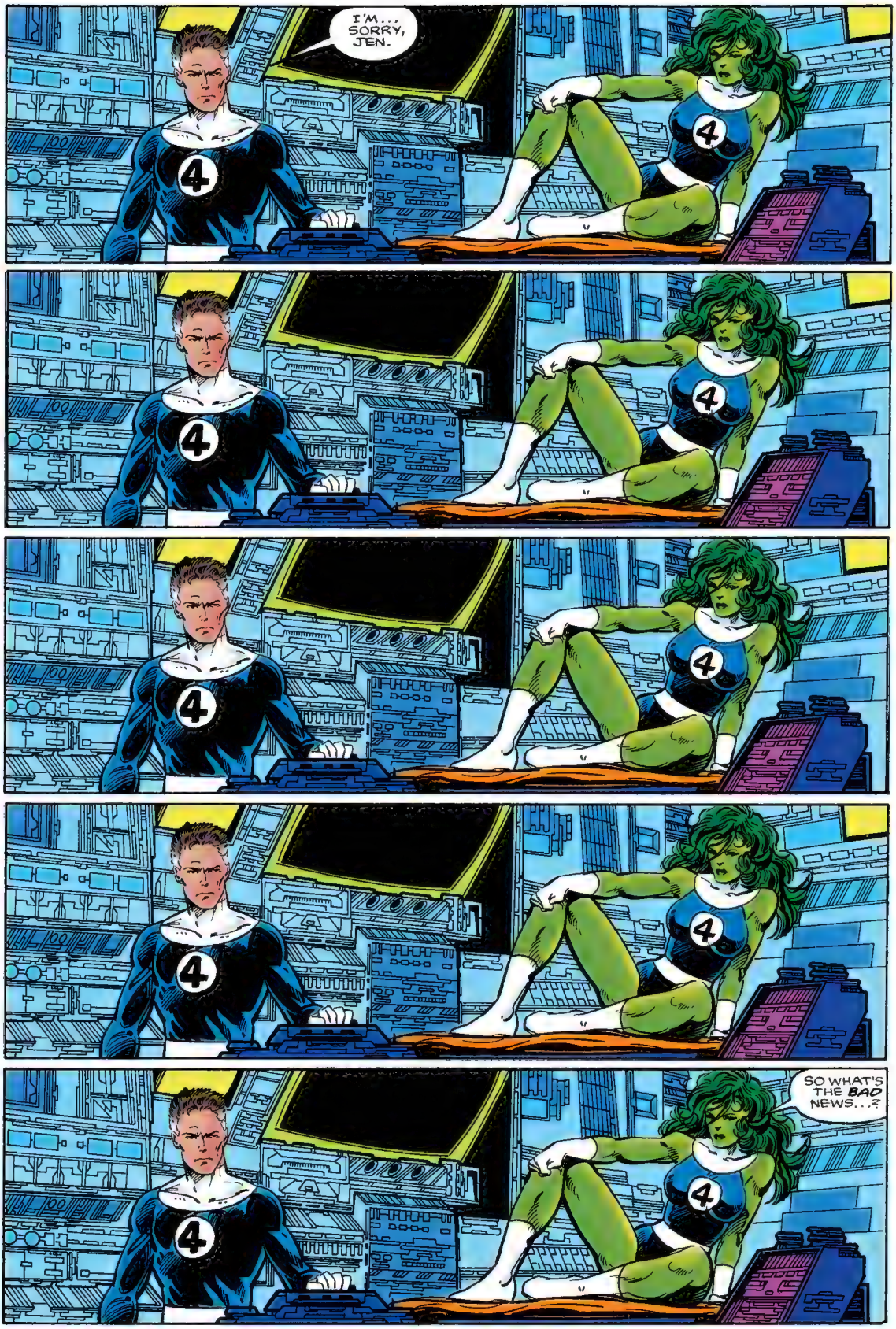
ME?? GAFFER, YOU MUST'VE BEEN KNOCKED ON THE HEAD...
NEVER THOUGHT MORE CLEARLY.
WHAT'S THE OLD QUOTE? "THE PROSPECT OF EXECUTION CONCENTRATES THE MIND WONDERFULLY."
YOU'RE OUR ONLY HOPE, SHE-HULK.
HOW DO YOU FIGURE THAT... "GAFFER," IS IT? SHE-HULK IS NO SCIENTIST.
NOT EVEN CLOSE.
NO, BUT SHE'S THE STRONGEST THING IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, AND IF MY GUESS IS RIGHT ABOUT WHAT'S GONE WRONG WITH THE PILE, WE'LL NEED HER STRENGTH.
MAYBE--BUT I'LL JUST BET YOU HAVEN'T GOT A RADIATION SUIT IN MY SIZE!
NO, BUT IF MY TESTS OF YOUR BIO-STRUCTURE WERE ACCURATE--AND THEY WERE--YOU HAVE A HIGHER TOLERANCE FOR RADIATION THAN US MORTALS.
JEN, I DON'T CARE FOR THIS AT ALL. THESE PEOPLE KIDNAP YOU, POKE AND PROD YOU, DAMN NEAR KILL YOU, AND EXPECT YOU TO SAVE THEIR HIDES?
IT'S NOT JUST THEM, WYATT. IF IT WAS I'D BE TEMPTED TO TOSS YOU OVER MY SHOULDER AND BE A HUNDRED MILES AWAY BEFORE THIS THING WENT KA-BLOOIE.
BUT THAT TOWN... INNOCENT CIVILIANS...
YOU'RE SURE SHE-HULK CAN WALK AWAY FROM THIS UNHARMED, OLD MAN?
I DIDN'T EXACTLY SAY THAT, INJUN.
I JUST SAID SHE'S GOT A BETTER CHANCE THAN US. I HAVE NO IDEA EXACTLY WHAT EXPOSURE TO THIS KIND OF RADIATION, IN THESE QUANTITIES, COULD DO TO HER ALREADY IRRADIATED CELLS.
BUT, LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, SHE-HULK...
IF YOU DO IT, YOU MAY NOT BE HURT...
AND IF I DON'T WE'RE ALL DEAD FOR SURE.
THAT'S SOME KINDA CHOICE YOU'VE WHIPPED UP FOR ME THERE, GAFFER.

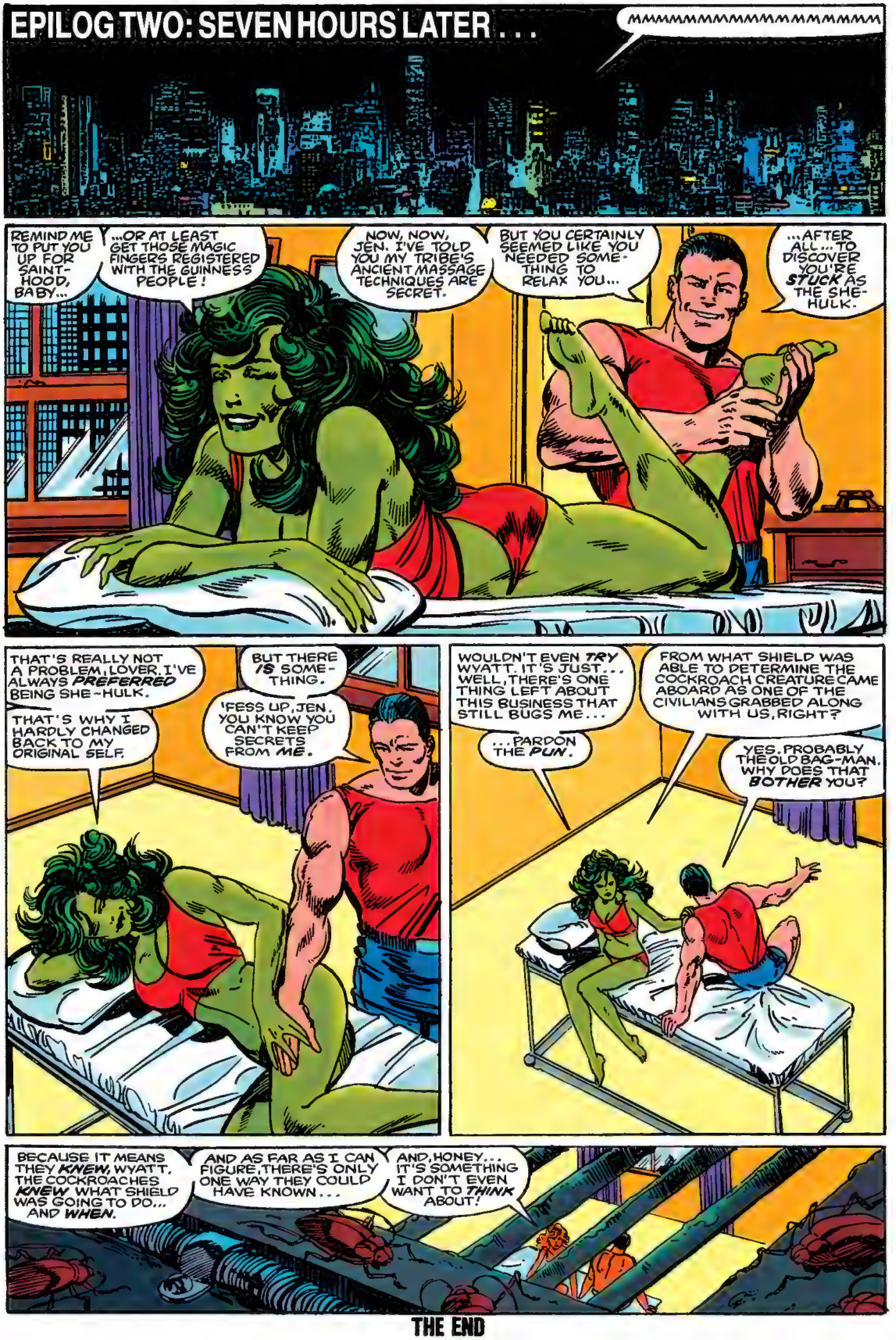
"WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO...?"
DANG
RADIATIO

WHAT THE...?
SMEK
OH... MY... GOD...
THE COCKROACHES!!
NO... NO!
NO!!


WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG? SOMETHING SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED BY NOW.
DAMMIT ALL, I SHOULD HAVE GONE WITH HER!
AND ACCOMPLISHED WHAT, WINGFOOT?
YOU'D ONLY HAVE GOTTEN YOURSELF A LETHAL DOSE OF HARD RADIATION.
AND BELIEVE YOU ME, RADIATION POISONING IS A LOUSY WAY TO DIE!
BUT NOT SO AWFUL THAT YOU WOULDN'T RISK EXPOSING JEN... SHE-HULK TO IT?
SHE WAS TOLD THE RISK.
BESIDES, I THINK WE'RE SAFE IN ASSUMING SHE'S SUCCESSFULLY CLOSED DOWN THE PILE. IF SHE HADN'T WE'D ALL HAVE GONE POOF BY NOW.
WISH I HADN'T DROPPED MY SCANNER...
SO THE PILE HASN'T BLOWN! THAT TELLS US NOTHING!
SHE COULD STILL BE LYING DEAD IN THERE.
AND...AND I DON'T MUCH CARE FOR THE PROSPECT OF LIFE WITHOUT HER...
ME NEITHER, LOVER. THANKS FOR THE KIND WORDS.
JEN!!
...JEN...?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WELLLL... I COULD USE A SHOWER OR TWELVE.
YEH. I GUESS I'M OKAY.
NEVER SQUASHED SO MANY ROACHES IN MY LIFE, BUT...
I'D SAY WE WON!!


EPILOG ONE: NEW YORK, THREE DAYS LATER . . .
ALL RIGHT, JENNIFER, YOU'RE "CLEAN", NO SIGN OF ROACH CONTAMINATION ANYWHERE IN YOUR SYSTEM.
THAT'S A RELIEF.
I THINK I'VE TAKEN FIFTY SHOWERS IN THE LAST SEVENTY-ODD HOURS, AND I STILL FEEL LIKE THOSE LITTLE BUGGERS ARE CRAWLING ALL OVER ME.
NOT SURPRISING. A TRULY REMARKABLE CASE I'D SAY. COCKROACH INTELLIGENCE, HUMAN CORPSES AS HOSTS...
YOU'RE CERTAIN YOU CAN SHED NO FURTHER LIGHT ON HOW SUCH A CREATURE CAME INTO EXISTENCE?
JUST WHAT THE THING SAID ABOUT HAVING BEEN AROUND A LONG TIME--AND HOW IT CLEARLY THRIVED ON RADIOACTIVITY.
MM. THAT'S UNDOUBTEDLY THE KEY. SOME KIND OF MUTATION, PROBABLY CAUSED BY EXPOSURE TO HARD RADIATION. AN OLD ATOMIC TEST, PERHAPS.
A PITY WE DON'T HAVE ONE OR TWO OF THE INDIVIDUAL ROACHES TO STUDY.
SORRY. ONCE I GOT STARTED THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP FROM WOOFING MY COOKIES WAS TO CONCENTRATE ON GOOSHING ALL OF THEM.
BUT...
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE, ISN'T THERE, REED?
I GET THE FEELING THAT YOU'RE TALKING AROUND SOME BAD NEWS.
...YES.
YES, I'M AFRAID I AM, JENNIFER. YOU SEE, THE EXPOSURE TO SHIELD'S ATOMIC PILE DID AFFECT YOU.
IT'S PUT A... GENETIC LOCK ON THE RADIATION ALREADY IN YOUR CELLS.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE OR BECOME ILL OR ANYTHING OF THAT NATURE--NO MORE THAN THE REST OF US...BUT--
BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'RE SHE-HULK PERMANENTLY NOW.
YOU CAN NEVER BECOME JENNIFER WALTERS AGAIN.


I'M... SORRY, JEN.
SO WHAT'S THE BAD NEWS...?


EPILOG TWO: SEVEN HOURS LATER . . .
MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM
REMIND ME TO PUT YOU UP FOR SAINT-HOOD, BABY...
...OR AT LEAST GET THOSE MAGIC FINGERS REGISTERED WITH THE GUINNESS PEOPLE!
NOW, NOW, JEN. I'VE TOLD YOU MY TRIBE'S ANCIENT MASSAGE TECHNIQUES ARE SECRET.
BUT YOU CERTAINLY SEEMED LIKE YOU NEEDED SOMETHING TO RELAX YOU...
...AFTER ALL... TO DISCOVER YOU'RE STUCK AS THE SHE-HULK.
THAT'S REALLY NOT A PROBLEM, LOVER. I'VE ALWAYS PREFERRED BEING SHE-HULK.
THAT'S WHY I HARDLY CHANGED BACK TO MY ORIGINAL SELF.
BUT THERE IS SOMETHING.
'FESS UP, JEN. YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T KEEP SECRETS FROM ME.
WOULDN'T EVEN TRY WYATT. IT'S JUST... WELL, THERE'S ONE THING LEFT ABOUT THIS BUSINESS THAT STILL BUGS ME...
...PARDON THE PUN.
FROM WHAT SHIELD WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE THE COCKROACH CREATURE CAME ABOARD AS ONE OF THE CIVILIANS GRABBED ALONG WITH US, RIGHT?
YES, PROBABLY THE OLD BAG-MAN. WHY DOES THAT BOTHER YOU?
BECAUSE IT MEANS THEY KNEW, WYATT. THE COCKROACHES KNEW WHAT SHIELD WAS GOING TO DO... AND WHEN.
AND AS FAR AS I CAN FIGURE, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY THEY COULD HAVE KNOWN...
AND, HONEY... IT'S SOMETHING I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT!
THE END

JOHN BYRNE

KIM DeMULDER

PETRA SCOTESE

MARVEL
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
SECRET WARS II
CONTINUES IN THIS ISSUE!
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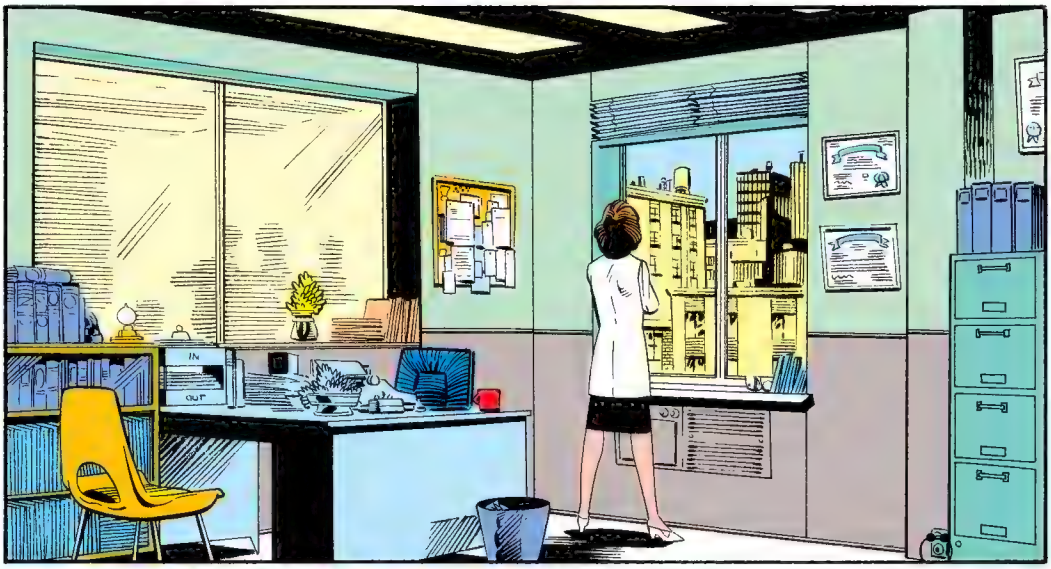
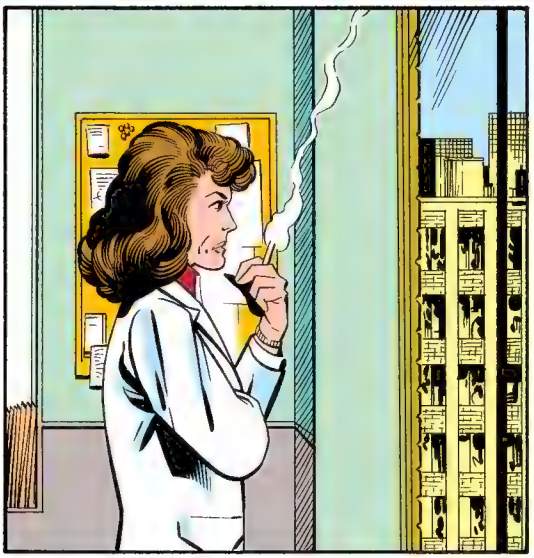
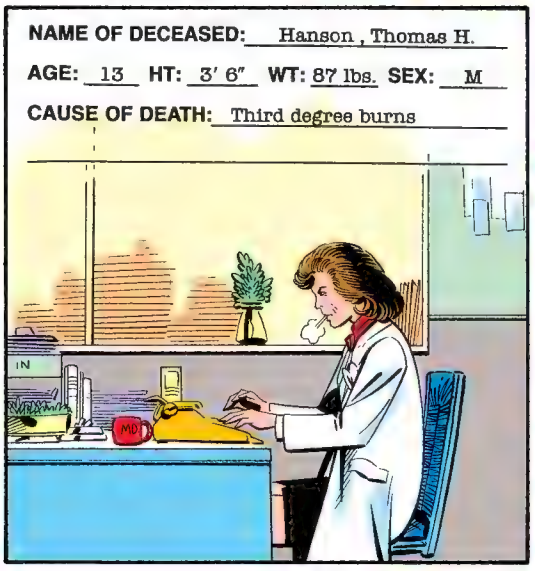
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
© 1985 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
I'M FINISHED.
I CAN'T BE THE HUMAN TORCH ANYMORE!
PACKARD
TERRIFIC FAN BURNS TO DEATH
"IT'S MY FAULT" SAYS TORCH





JANET, DID YOU FINISH UP THAT REPORT YET?
ANDERSON'S WAITING FOR IT.
HM...? OH, YES. HALF HOUR, DON. OR... BETTER MAKE THAT FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

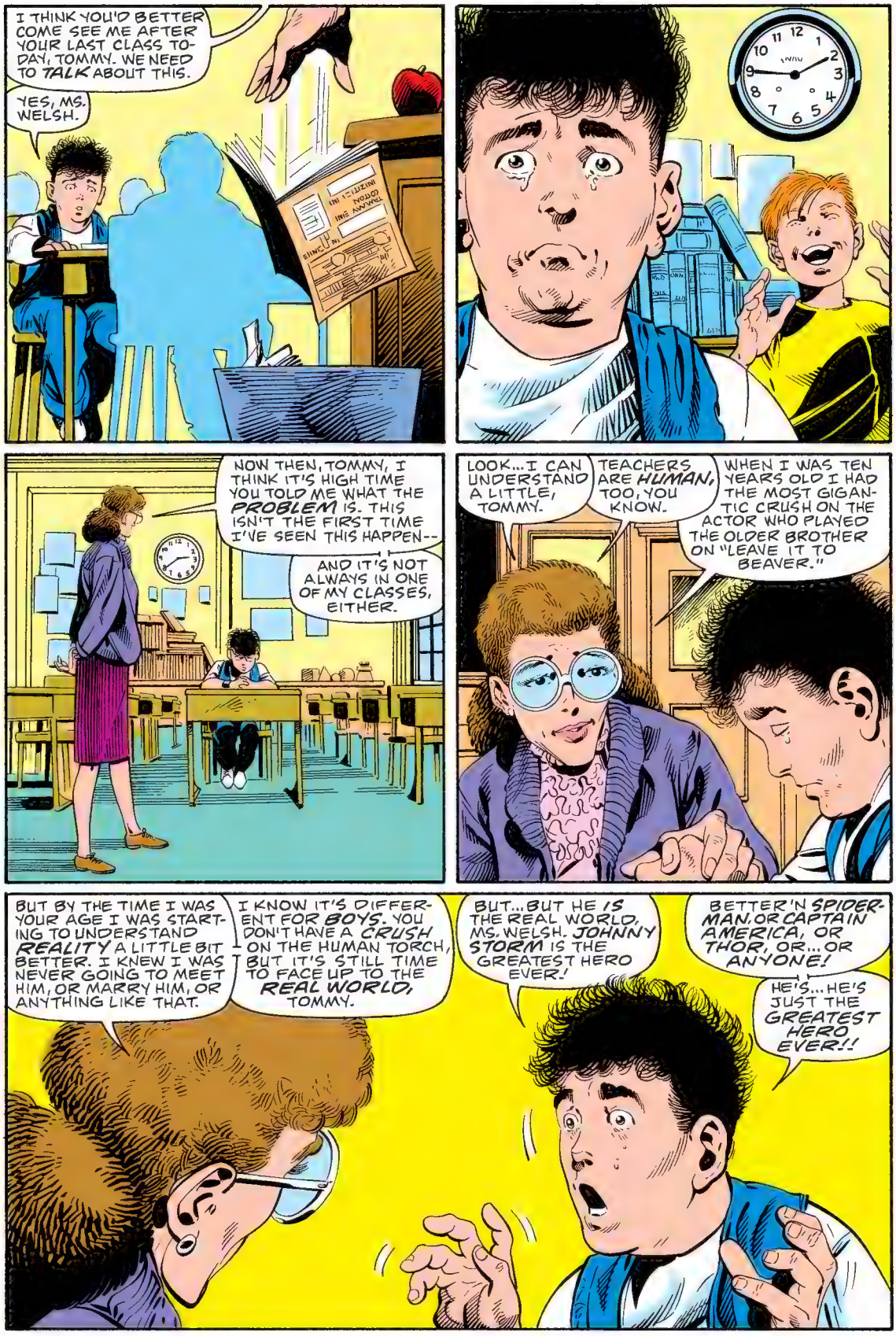

NAME OF DECEASED: Hanson, Thomas H.
AGE: 13 HT: 3' 6" WT: 87 lbs. SEX: M
CAUSE OF DEATH: Third degree burns

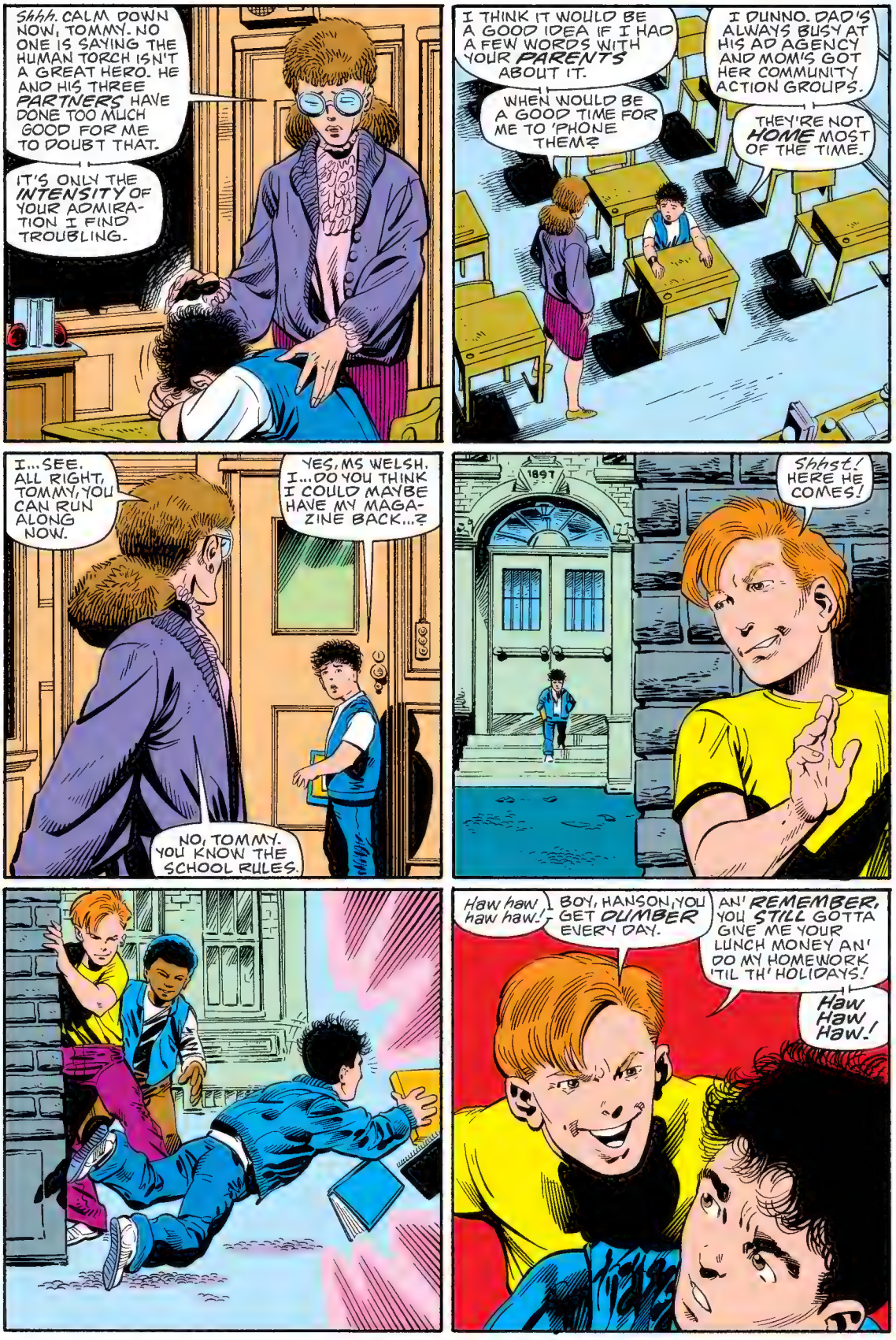
NO.
THAT'S TOO EASY.
AND IF THERE'S ONE THING THIS CASE ISN'T, IT'S EASY.
RR-TTT

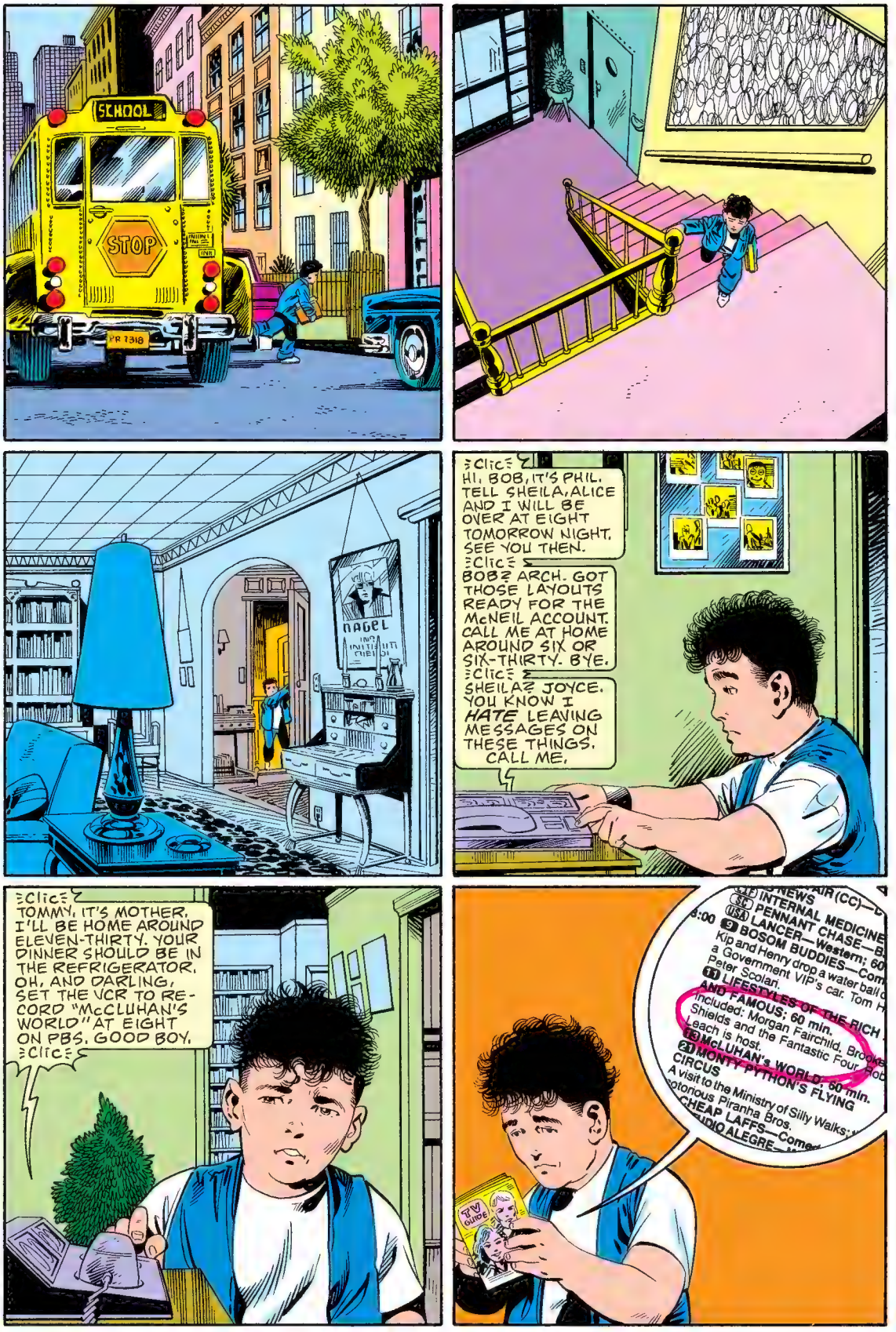
Stan Lee presents
HERO
HEY, HANSON, DIDJA EVER SEE THIS ISSUE OF CELEBRITY?
NO... WHY?
THE HUMAN TORCH
WRITTEN AND PENCILED BY
JOHN BYRNE
INKED BY
AL GORDON
COLORED BY
GLYNIS OLIVER
LETTERED BY
JOHN WORKMAN
EDITED BY
MICHAEL CARLIN
SUPERVISED BY
JIM SHOOTER

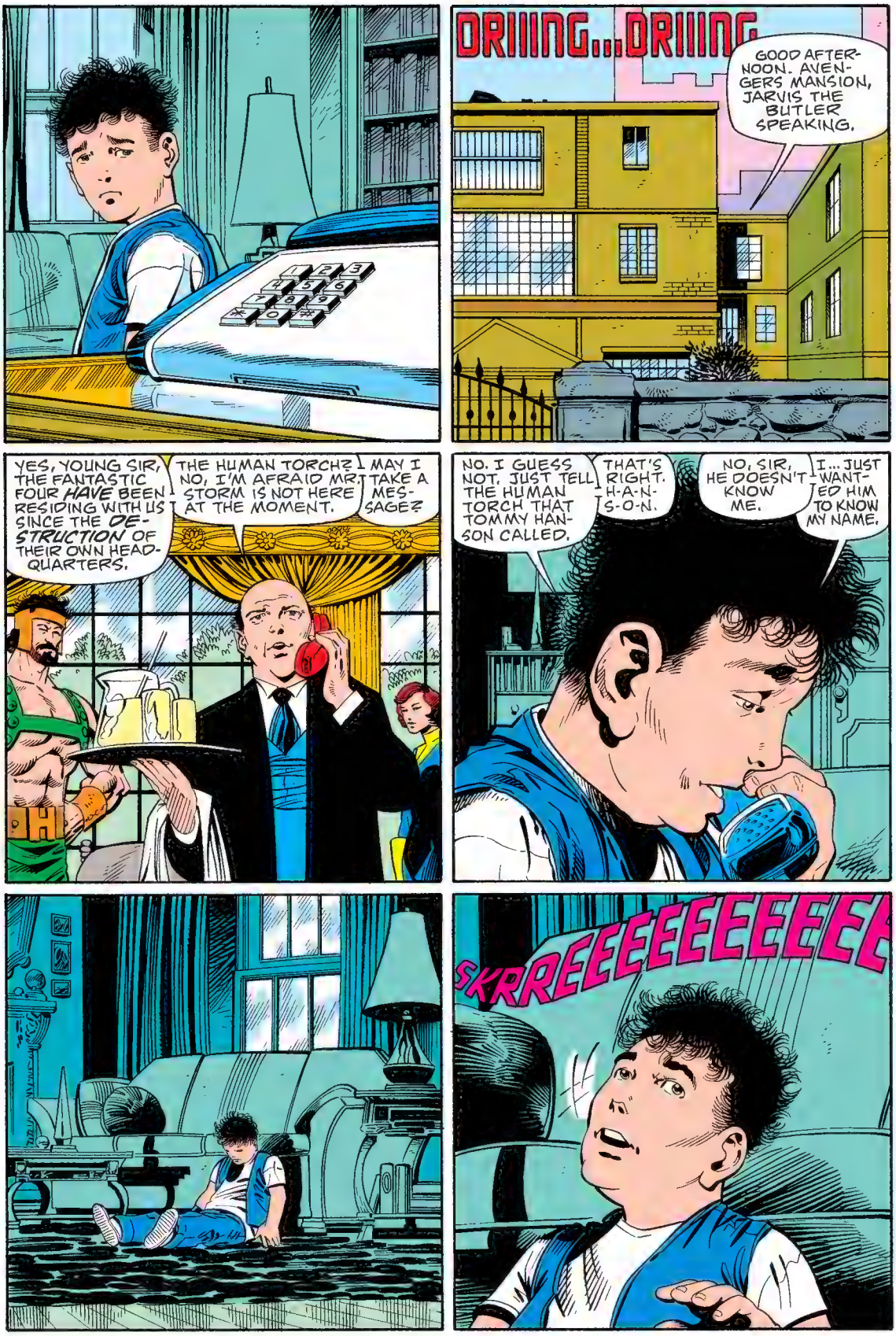
OH, IT'S ONLY GOT EL HUGE-O ARTICLE ON TH' HUMAN TORCH, IS ALL.
OMI-GOSH!
I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF THAT ONE! LEMME SEE IT...
KL-73
KL-74
JOHNNY STORM
NOT SO FAST, SHORTY. YOU WANNA EVEN BREATHE ON IT, IT'S GONNA COST YA.
ANYTHING! ANYTHING! WHAT DO YOU WANT?
KL-69
KL-70
KL-71
KL-72
KL-7
Celebrity
WELL... LESSEE ...I PRETTY MUCH GOT EVERYTHING I NEED.
Y'KNOW, MAYBE I'LL JUST BURN IT!
OH NO! NO! PLEASE! I'LL... I'LL GIVE YOU MY LUNCH MONEY... FOR A WEEK!
CHEMISTRY
FOR A MONTH! AN' YOU'LL DO MY MATH HOMEWORK AN' ALL MY BOOK REPORTS 'TIL CHRISTMAS!
YES! YES!
NOW, PLEASE, CAN I HAVE THE MAGAZINE? ...
PLEASE???
HERE YA GO, TURKEY.
SEE, COOLEY? I TOLDJA IT'D BE A SNAP!
OHH!!

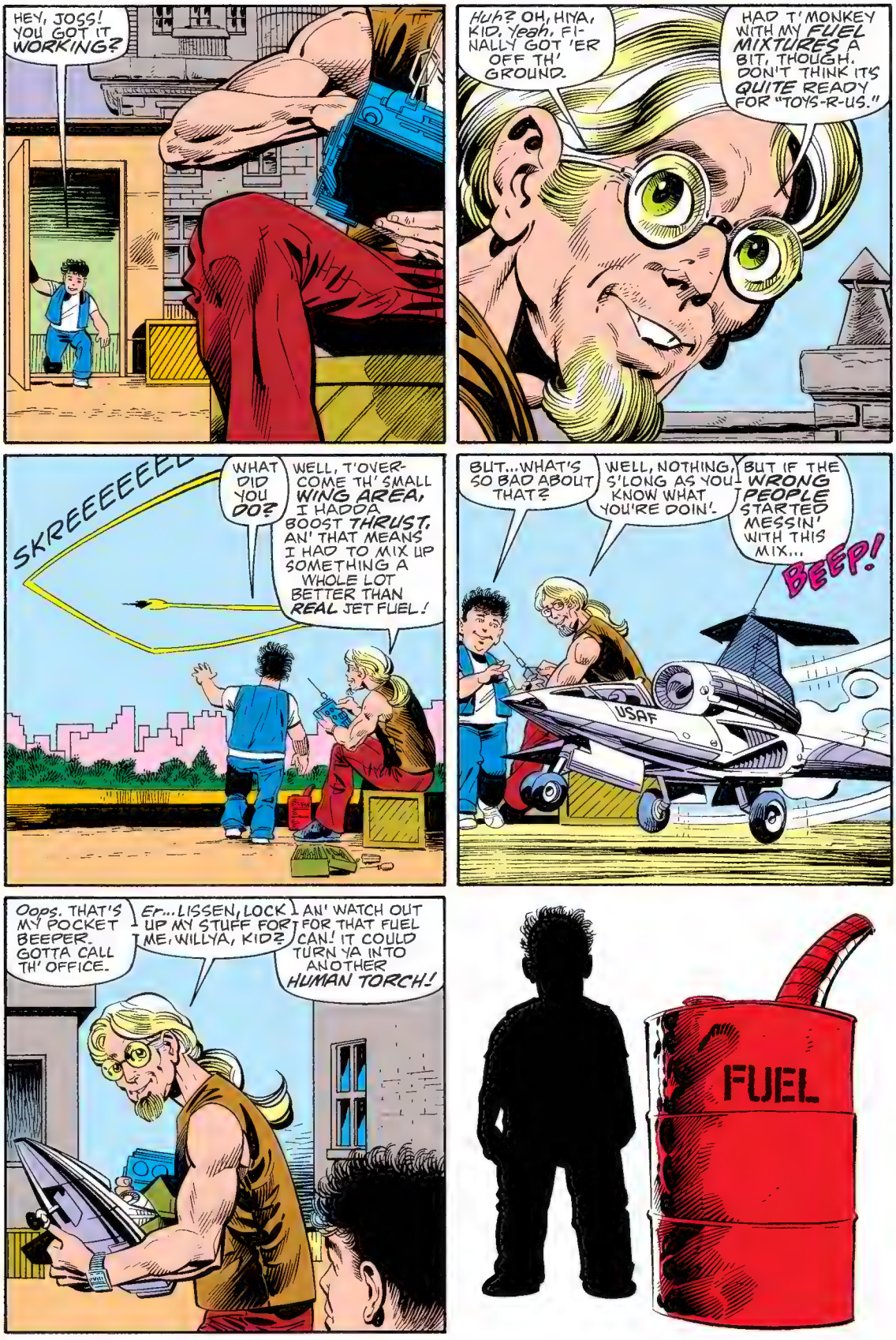
DRRIIINNG!
OHH... DARN!
Celebrity
"...BUT YIELD WHO WILL TO THEIR SEPARATION. MY OBJECT IN LIVING IS TO UNITE MY AVOCATION AND MY VOCATION AS MY TWO EYES MAKE ONE IN SIGHT.
"ONLY WHERE LOVE AND NEED ARE ONE, AND THE WORK IS PLAYED FOR MORTAL STAKES, IS THE DEED EVER REALLY DONE, FOR HEAVEN AND THE FUTURE'S SAKES."
...OH...
THIS DOESN'T LOOK VERY MUCH LIKE THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ROBERT FROST, TOMMY.
N-NO, MS. WELSH.

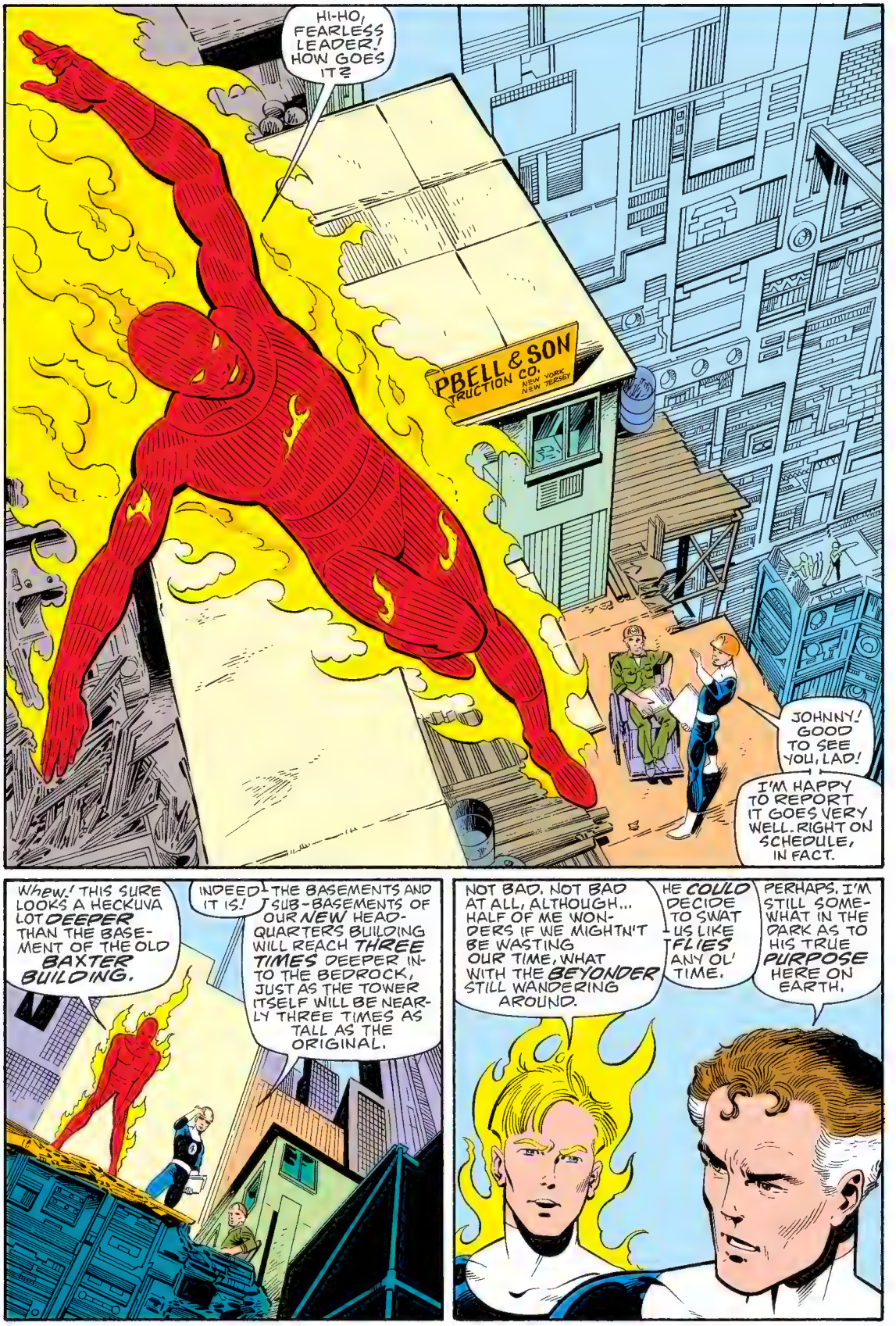

I THINK YOU'D BETTER COME SEE ME AFTER YOUR LAST CLASS TODAY, TOMMY. WE NEED TO *TALK* ABOUT THIS.
YES, MS. WELSH.
NOW THEN, TOMMY, I THINK IT'S HIGH TIME YOU TOLD ME WHAT THE *PROBLEM* IS. THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN THIS HAPPEN--
AND IT'S NOT ALWAYS IN ONE OF MY CLASSES, EITHER.
LOOK...I CAN UNDERSTAND A LITTLE, TOMMY.
TEACHERS ARE *HUMAN*, TOO, YOU KNOW.
WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD I HAD THE MOST GIGANTIC CRUSH ON THE ACTOR WHO PLAYED THE OLDER BROTHER ON "LEAVE IT TO BEAVER."
BUT BY THE TIME I WAS YOUR AGE I WAS STARTING TO UNDERSTAND *REALITY* A LITTLE BIT BETTER. I KNEW I WAS NEVER GOING TO MEET HIM, OR MARRY HIM, OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
I KNOW IT'S DIFFERENT FOR *BOYS*. YOU DON'T HAVE A *CRUSH* ON THE HUMAN TORCH, BUT IT'S STILL TIME TO FACE UP TO THE *REAL WORLD*, TOMMY.
BUT...BUT HE *IS* THE REAL WORLD, MS. WELSH. *JOHNNY STORM* IS THE GREATEST HERO EVER!
BETTER'N *SPIDER-MAN*, OR *CAPTAIN AMERICA*, OR *THOR*, OR...OR *ANYONE!*
HE'S...HE'S JUST THE *GREATEST HERO EVER!!*

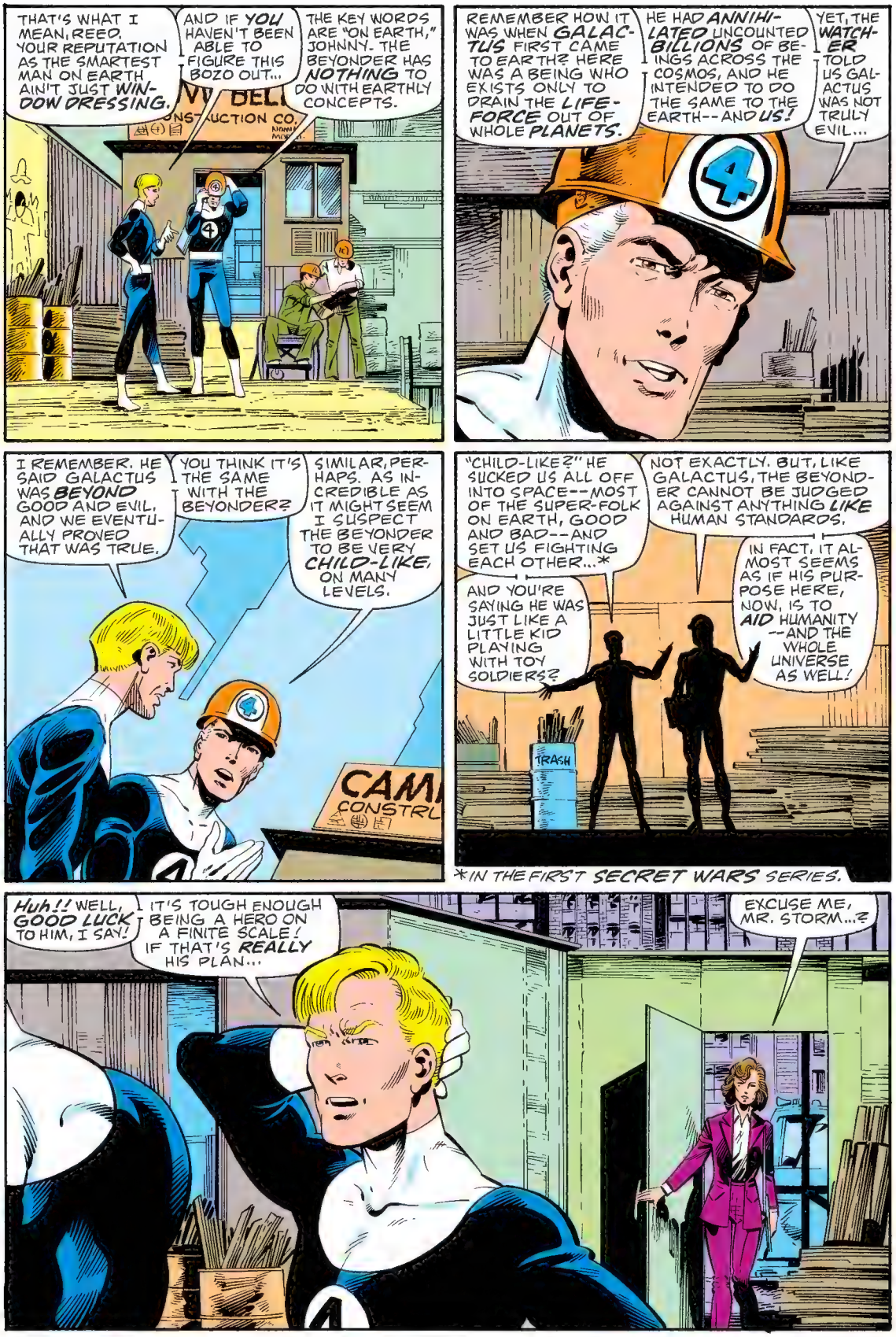

Shhh. CALM DOWN NOW, TOMMY. NO ONE IS SAYING THE HUMAN TORCH ISN'T A GREAT HERO. HE AND HIS THREE PARTNERS HAVE DONE TOO MUCH GOOD FOR ME TO DOUBT THAT.
IT'S ONLY THE INTENSITY OF YOUR ADMIRATION I FIND TROUBLING.
I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF I HAD A FEW WORDS WITH YOUR PARENTS ABOUT IT.
WHEN WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR ME TO 'PHONE THEM?
I DUNNO. DAD'S ALWAYS BUSY AT HIS AD AGENCY AND MOM'S GOT HER COMMUNITY ACTION GROUPS.
THEY'RE NOT HOME MOST OF THE TIME.
I... SEE. ALL RIGHT, TOMMY, YOU CAN RUN ALONG NOW.
YES, MS WELSH. I... DO YOU THINK I COULD MAYBE HAVE MY MAGAZINE BACK...?
NO, TOMMY. YOU KNOW THE SCHOOL RULES.
1897
Shhst! HERE HE COMES!
Haw haw haw haw!
BOY, HANSON, YOU GET DUMBER EVERY DAY.
AN' REMEMBER, YOU STILL GOTTA GIVE ME YOUR LUNCH MONEY AN' DO MY HOMEWORK 'TIL TH' HOLIDAYS!
Haw Haw Haw!

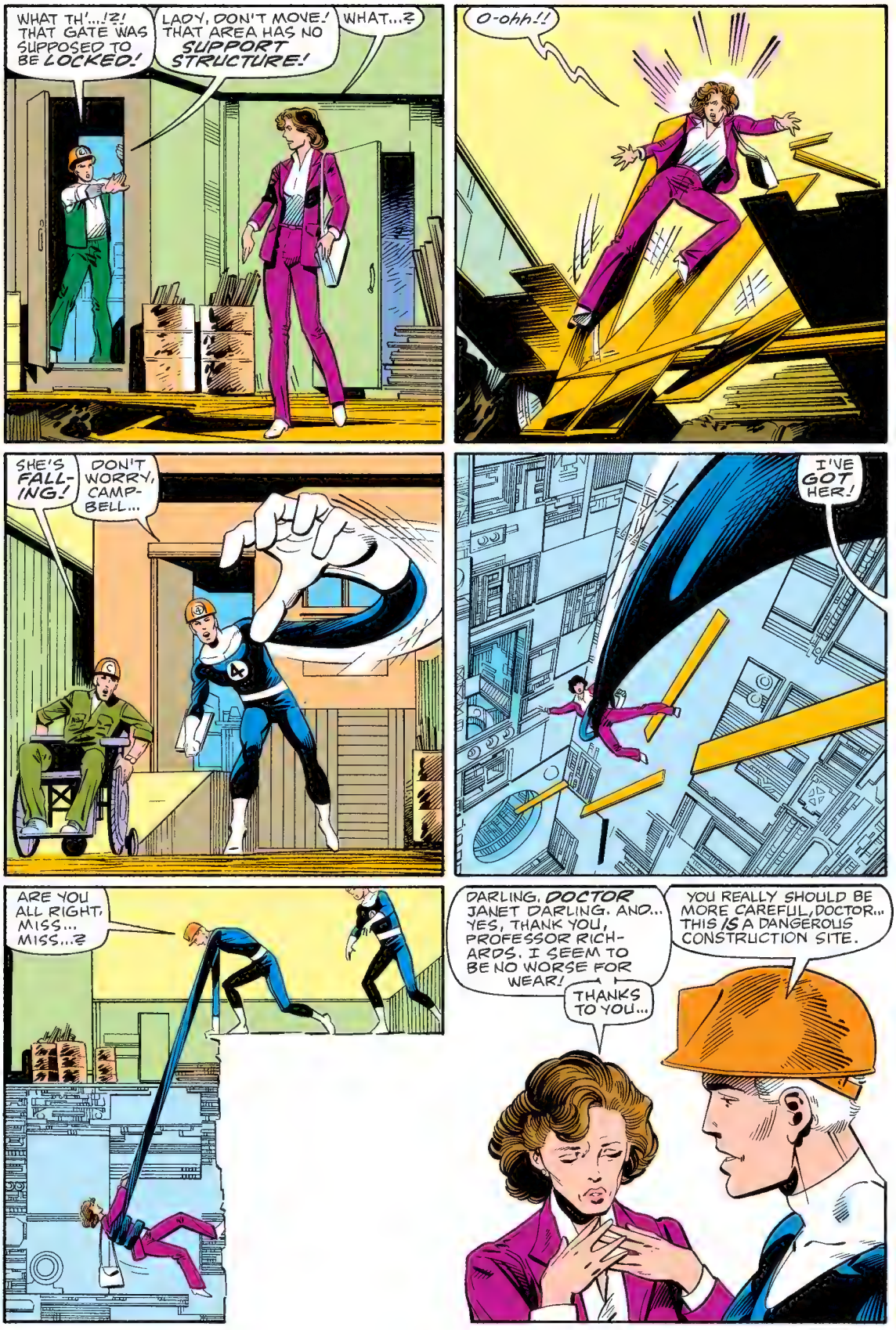

SCHOOL
STOP
YR 7318
CLICK
HI, BOB, IT'S PHIL. TELL SHEILA, ALICE AND I WILL BE OVER AT EIGHT TOMORROW NIGHT. SEE YOU THEN.
CLICK
BOB? ARCH. GOT THOSE LAYOUTS READY FOR THE McNEIL ACCOUNT. CALL ME AT HOME AROUND SIX OR SIX-THIRTY. BYE.
CLICK
SHEILA? JOYCE. YOU KNOW I HATE LEAVING MESSAGES ON THESE THINGS. CALL ME.
CLICK
TOMMY, IT'S MOTHER. I'LL BE HOME AROUND ELEVEN-THIRTY. YOUR DINNER SHOULD BE IN THE REFRIGERATOR. OH, AND DARLING, SET THE VCR TO RECORD "McCLUHAN'S WORLD" AT EIGHT ON PBS. GOOD BOY.
CLICK
INTERNAL MEDICINE
PENNANT CHASE—B
LANCER—Western: 60
BOSOM BUDDIES—Com
Kip and Henry drop a water ball
a Government VIP's car. Tom H
Peter Scolari.
LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH
AND FAMOUS: 60 min.
Included: Morgan Fairchild, Brooke
Shields and the Fantastic Four. Bob
Leach is host.
McLUHAN'S WORLD: 60 min.
MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING
CIRCUS
A visit to the Ministry of Silly Walks;
notorious Piranha Bros.
CHEAP LAFFS—Come
TV GUIDE

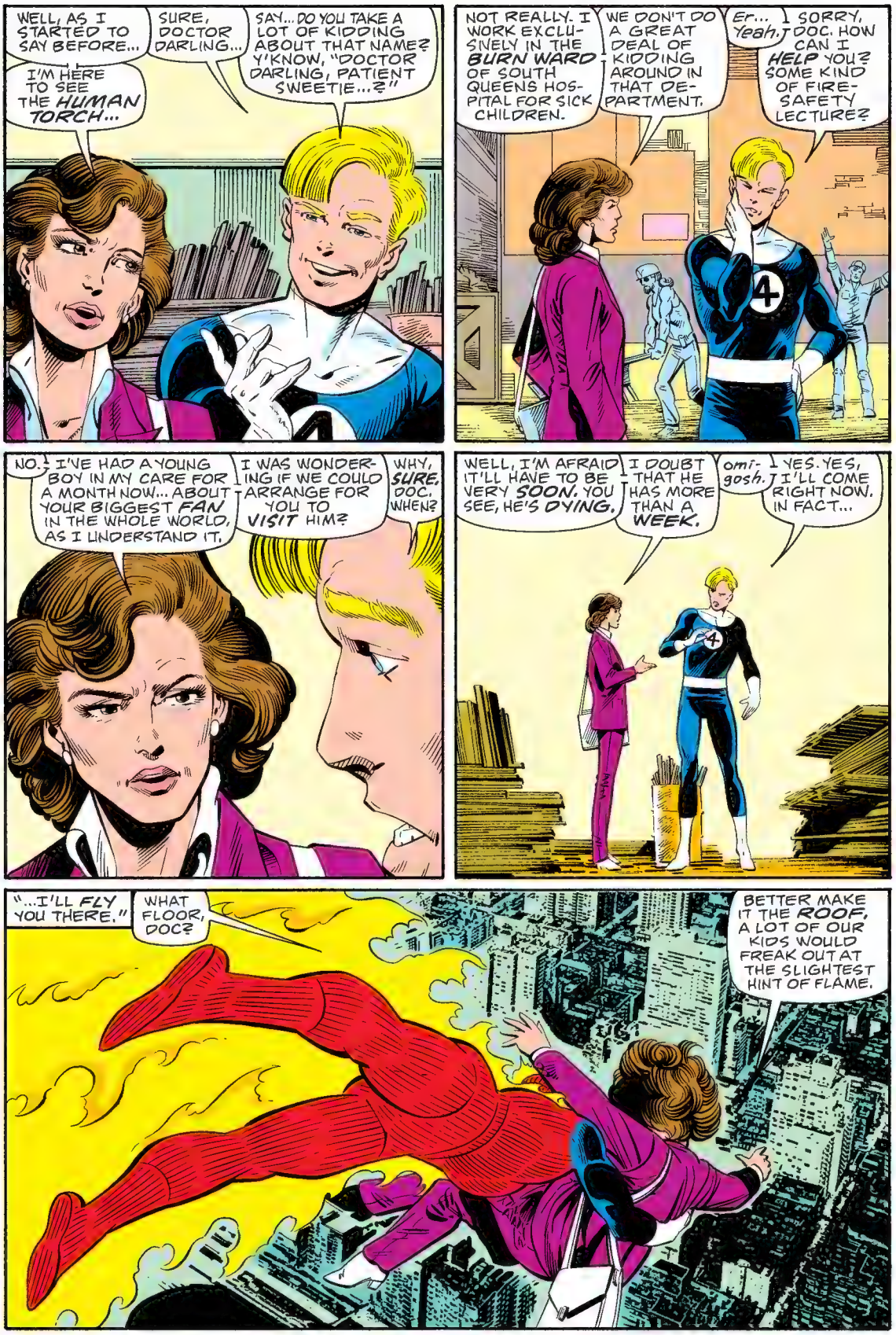

DRIIING...DRIIING
GOOD AFTERNOON. AVENGERS MANSION, JARVIS THE BUTLER SPEAKING.
YES, YOUNG SIR, THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE BEEN RESIDING WITH US SINCE THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR OWN HEADQUARTERS.
THE HUMAN TORCH? NO, I'M AFRAID MR. STORM IS NOT HERE AT THE MOMENT.
MAY I TAKE A MESSAGE?
NO. I GUESS NOT. JUST TELL THE HUMAN TORCH THAT TOMMY HANSON CALLED.
THAT'S RIGHT. H-A-N-S-O-N.
NO, SIR, HE DOESN'T KNOW ME.
I... JUST WANTED HIM TO KNOW MY NAME.
SKRREEEEEEEEEE

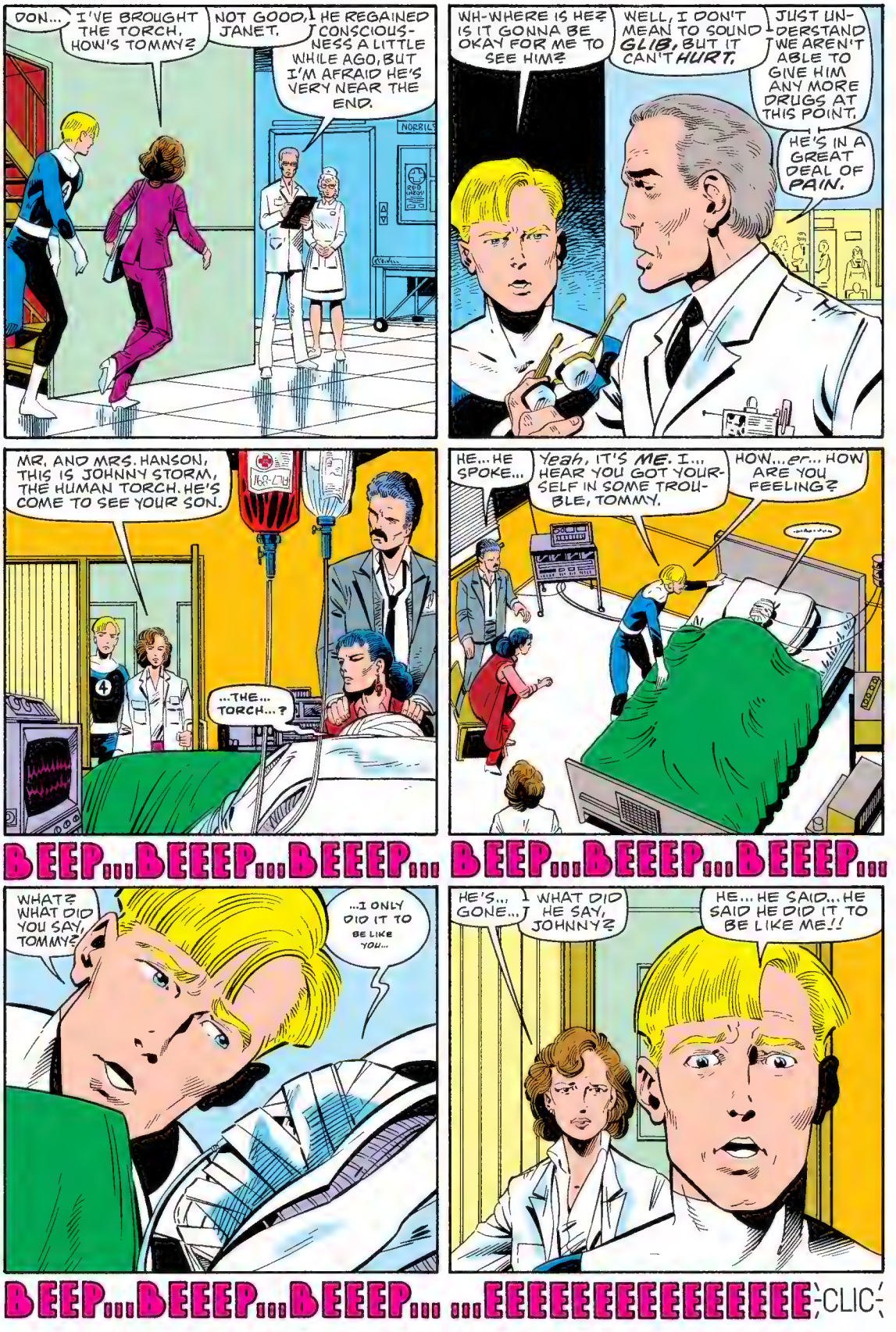

HEY, JOSS! YOU GOT IT WORKING?
Huh? OH, HIYA, KID. Yeah, FINALLY GOT 'ER OFF TH' GROUND.
HAD T' MONKEY WITH MY FUEL MIXTURES A BIT, THOUGH. DON'T THINK IT'S QUITE READY FOR "TOYS-R-US."
SKREEEEEEL
WHAT DID YOU DO?
WELL, T'OVERCOME TH' SMALL WING AREA, I HADDA BOOST THRUST, AN' THAT MEANS I HAD TO MIX UP SOMETHING A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN REAL JET FUEL!
BUT...WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT THAT?
WELL, NOTHING, S'LONG AS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN'.
BUT IF THE WRONG PEOPLE STARTED MESSIN' WITH THIS MIX...
BEEP!
USAF
Oops. THAT'S MY POCKET BEEPER. GOTTA CALL TH' OFFICE.
Er...LISSEN, LOCK UP MY STUFF FOR ME, WILLYA, KID?
AN' WATCH OUT FOR THAT FUEL CAN! IT COULD TURN YA INTO ANOTHER HUMAN TORCH!
FUEL

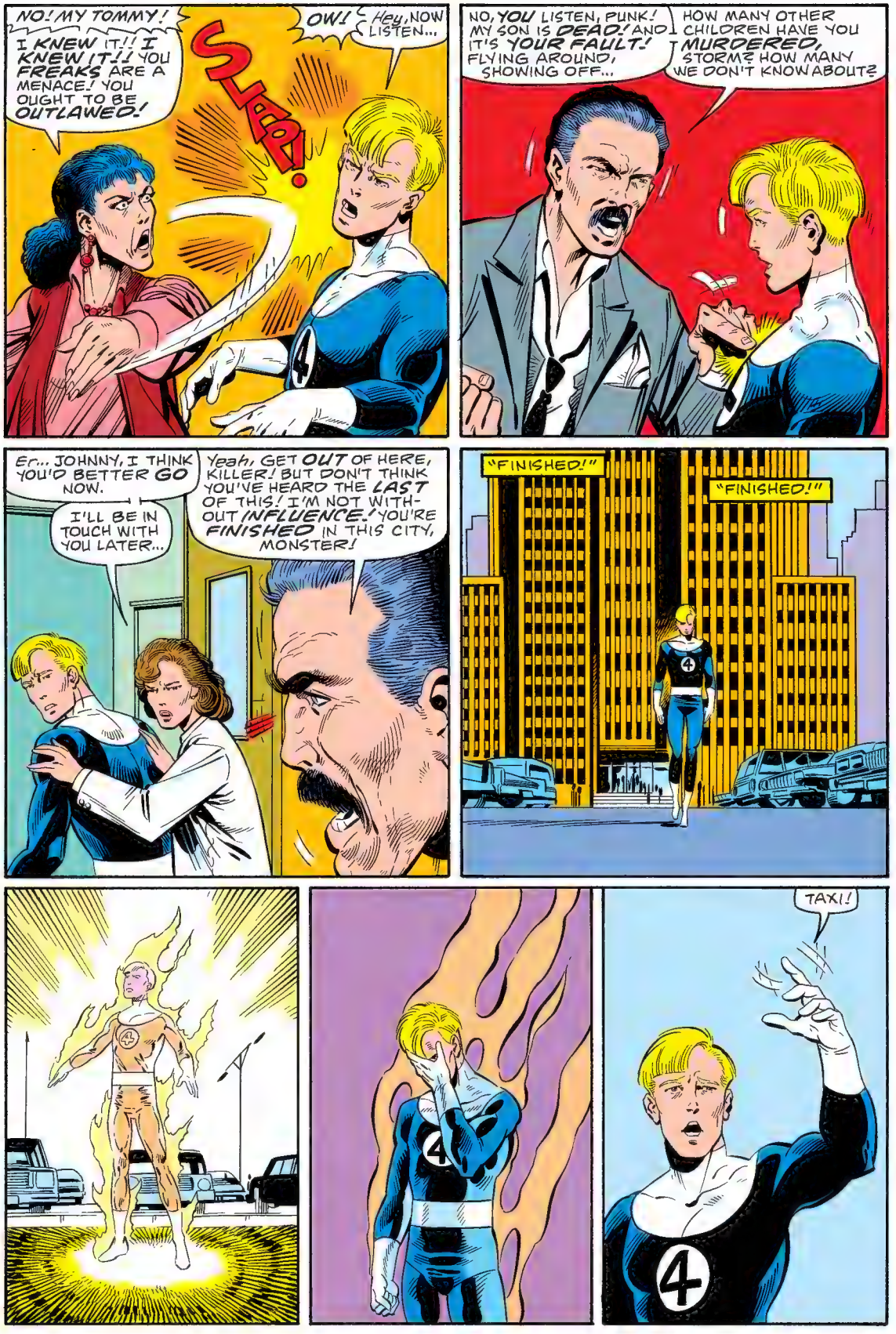

HI-HO, FEARLESS LEADER! HOW GOES IT?
PBELL & SON
TRUCTION CO.
NEW YORK
NEW JERSEY
JOHNNY! GOOD TO SEE YOU, LAD!
I'M HAPPY TO REPORT IT GOES VERY WELL. RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, IN FACT.
Whew! THIS SURE LOOKS A HECKUVA LOT DEEPER THAN THE BASEMENT OF THE OLD BAXTER BUILDING.
INDEED IT IS! THE BASEMENTS AND SUB-BASEMENTS OF OUR NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING WILL REACH THREE TIMES DEEPER INTO THE BEDROCK, JUST AS THE TOWER ITSELF WILL BE NEARLY THREE TIMES AS TALL AS THE ORIGINAL.
NOT BAD. NOT BAD AT ALL, ALTHOUGH... HALF OF ME WONDERS IF WE MIGHTN'T BE WASTING OUR TIME, WHAT WITH THE BEYONDER STILL WANDERING AROUND.
HE COULD DECIDE TO SWAT US LIKE FLIES ANY OL' TIME.
PERHAPS. I'M STILL SOMEWHAT IN THE DARK AS TO HIS TRUE PURPOSE HERE ON EARTH.

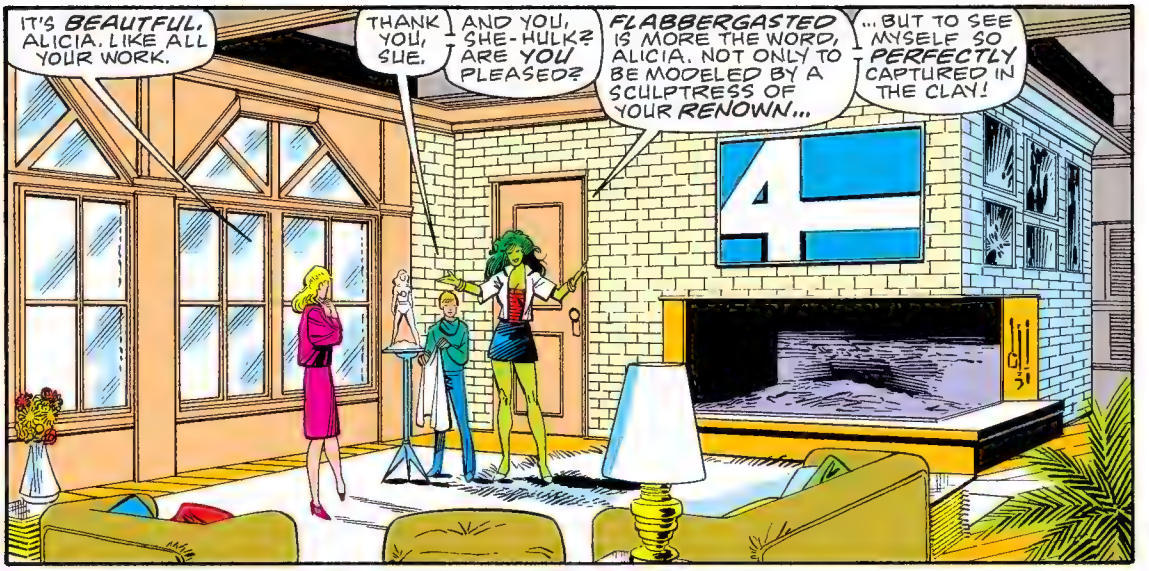

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN, REED. YOUR REPUTATION AS THE SMARTEST MAN ON EARTH AIN'T JUST WINDOW DRESSING.
AND IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE THIS BOZO OUT...
THE KEY WORDS ARE "ON EARTH," JOHNNY. THE BEYONDER HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH EARTHLY CONCEPTS.
REMEMBER HOW IT WAS WHEN GALACTUS FIRST CAME TO EARTH? HERE WAS A BEING WHO EXISTS ONLY TO DRAIN THE LIFE-FORCE OUT OF WHOLE PLANETS.
HE HAD ANNIHILATED UNCOUNTED BILLIONS OF BEINGS ACROSS THE COSMOS, AND HE INTENDED TO DO THE SAME TO THE EARTH--AND US!
YET, THE WATCHER TOLD US GALACTUS WAS NOT TRULY EVIL...
I REMEMBER. HE SAID GALACTUS WAS BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL, AND WE EVENTUALLY PROVED THAT WAS TRUE.
YOU THINK IT'S THE SAME WITH THE BEYONDER?
SIMILAR, PERHAPS. AS INCREDIBLE AS IT MIGHT SEEM I SUSPECT THE BEYONDER TO BE VERY CHILD-LIKE, ON MANY LEVELS.
"CHILD-LIKE?" HE SUCKED US ALL OFF INTO SPACE--MOST OF THE SUPER-FOLK ON EARTH, GOOD AND BAD--AND SET US FIGHTING EACH OTHER...*
NOT EXACTLY. BUT, LIKE GALACTUS, THE BEYONDER CANNOT BE JUDGED AGAINST ANYTHING LIKE HUMAN STANDARDS.
AND YOU'RE SAYING HE WAS JUST LIKE A LITTLE KID PLAYING WITH TOY SOLDIERS?
IN FACT, IT ALMOST SEEMS AS IF HIS PURPOSE HERE, NOW, IS TO AID HUMANITY --AND THE WHOLE UNIVERSE AS WELL!
TRASH
*IN THE FIRST SECRET WARS SERIES.
Huh!! WELL, GOOD LUCK TO HIM, I SAY!
IT'S TOUGH ENOUGH BEING A HERO ON A FINITE SCALE! IF THAT'S REALLY HIS PLAN...
EXCUSE ME, MR. STORM...?

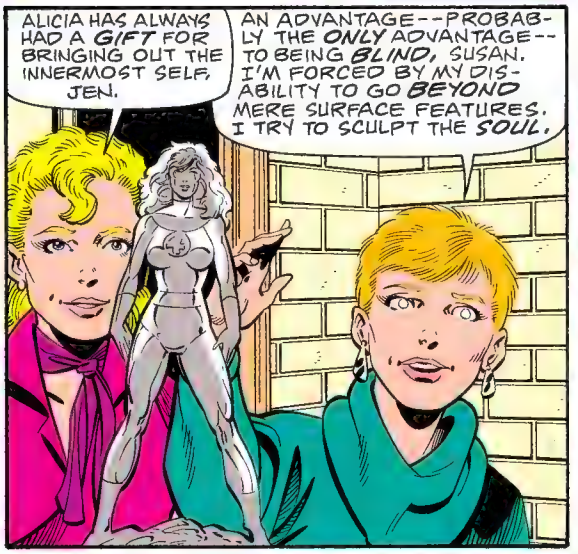

WHAT TH'...!?! THAT GATE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LOCKED!
LADY, DON'T MOVE! THAT AREA HAS NO SUPPORT STRUCTURE!
WHAT...?
O-ohh!!
SHE'S FALL-ING!
DON'T WORRY, CAMP-BELL...
I'VE GOT HER!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MISS... MISS...?
DARLING, DOCTOR JANET DARLING. AND... YES, THANK YOU, PROFESSOR RICH-ARDS. I SEEM TO BE NO WORSE FOR WEAR!
THANKS TO YOU...
YOU REALLY SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL, DOCTOR... THIS IS A DANGEROUS CONSTRUCTION SITE.


WELL, AS I STARTED TO SAY BEFORE...
I'M HERE TO SEE THE HUMAN TORCH...
SURE, DOCTOR DARLING...
SAY... DO YOU TAKE A LOT OF KIDDING ABOUT THAT NAME? Y'KNOW, "DOCTOR DARLING, PATIENT SWEETIE...?"
NOT REALLY. I WORK EXCLUSIVELY IN THE BURN WARD OF SOUTH QUEENS HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN.
WE DON'T DO A GREAT DEAL OF KIDDING AROUND IN THAT DEPARTMENT.
Er... Yeah.
SORRY, DOC. HOW CAN I HELP YOU? SOME KIND OF FIRE-SAFETY LECTURE?
NO. I'VE HAD A YOUNG BOY IN MY CARE FOR A MONTH NOW... ABOUT YOUR BIGGEST FAN IN THE WHOLE WORLD, AS I UNDERSTAND IT.
I WAS WONDERING IF WE COULD ARRANGE FOR YOU TO VISIT HIM?
WHY, SURE, DOC. WHEN?
WELL, I'M AFRAID IT'LL HAVE TO BE VERY SOON. YOU SEE, HE'S DYING.
I DOUBT THAT HE HAS MORE THAN A WEEK.
omigosh.
YES. YES, I'LL COME RIGHT NOW. IN FACT...
"...I'LL FLY YOU THERE."
WHAT FLOOR, DOC?
BETTER MAKE IT THE ROOF, A LOT OF OUR KIDS WOULD FREAK OUT AT THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF FLAME.

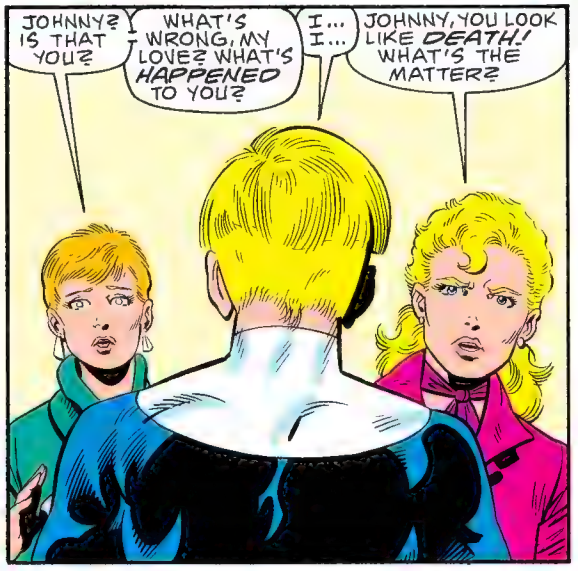

DON... I'VE BROUGHT THE TORCH, HOW'S TOMMY?
NOT GOOD, JANET. HE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS A LITTLE WHILE AGO, BUT I'M AFRAID HE'S VERY NEAR THE END.
WH-WHERE IS HE? IS IT GONNA BE OKAY FOR ME TO SEE HIM?
WELL, I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND GLIB, BUT IT CAN'T HURT.
JUST UNDERSTAND WE AREN'T ABLE TO GIVE HIM ANY MORE DRUGS AT THIS POINT.
HE'S IN A GREAT DEAL OF PAIN.
MR. AND MRS. HANSON, THIS IS JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH. HE'S COME TO SEE YOUR SON.
...THE... TORCH...?
HE... HE SPOKE...
Yeah, IT'S ME. I... HEAR YOU GOT YOURSELF IN SOME TROUBLE, TOMMY.
HOW... er... HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
BEEP...BEEEP...BEEEP...
BEEP...BEEEP...BEEEP...
WHAT? WHAT DID YOU SAY, TOMMY?
...I ONLY DID IT TO BE LIKE YOU...
HE'S... GONE...
WHAT DID HE SAY, JOHNNY?
HE... HE SAID... HE SAID HE DID IT TO BE LIKE ME!!
BEEP...BEEEP...BEEEP...
...EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE-CLIC-


NO! MY TOMMY!
I KNEW IT!! I KNEW IT!! YOU FREAKS ARE A MENACE! YOU OUGHT TO BE OUTLAWED!
SLAP!
OW!
Hey, NOW LISTEN...
NO, YOU LISTEN, PUNK! MY SON IS DEAD! AND IT'S YOUR FAULT! FLYING AROUND, SHOWING OFF...
HOW MANY OTHER CHILDREN HAVE YOU MURDERED, STORM? HOW MANY WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT?
Er... JOHNNY, I THINK YOU'D BETTER GO NOW.
I'LL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU LATER...
Yeah, GET OUT OF HERE, KILLER! BUT DON'T THINK YOU'VE HEARD THE LAST OF THIS! I'M NOT WITHOUT INFLUENCE! YOU'RE FINISHED IN THIS CITY, MONSTER!
"FINISHED!"
"FINISHED!"
TAXI!

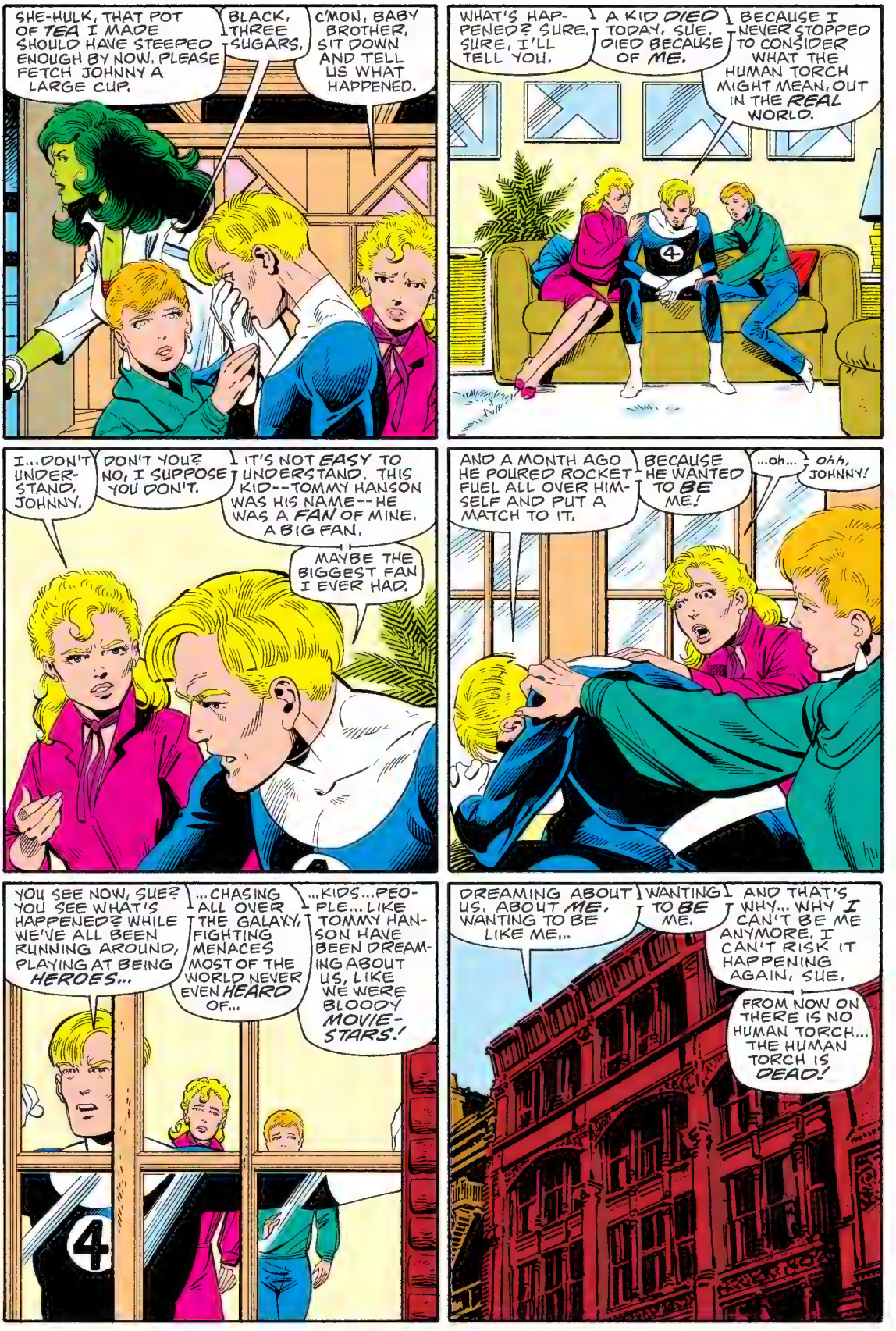

IT'S BEAUTFUL, ALICIA. LIKE ALL YOUR WORK.
THANK YOU, SUE.
AND YOU, SHE-HULK? ARE YOU PLEASED?
FLABBERGASTED IS MORE THE WORD, ALICIA. NOT ONLY TO BE MODELED BY A SCULPTRESS OF YOUR RENOWN...
...BUT TO SEE MYSELF SO PERFECTLY CAPTURED IN THE CLAY!

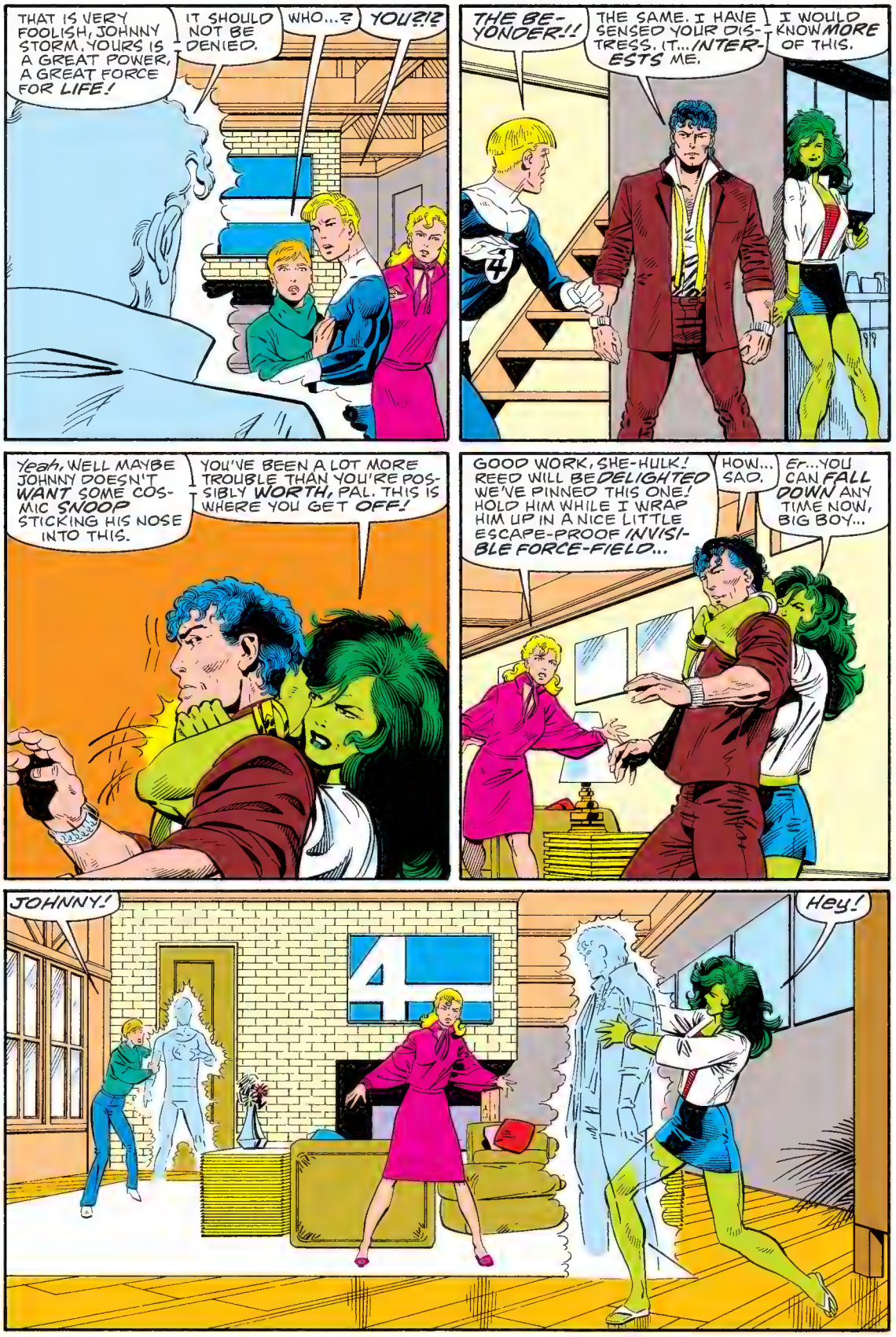

ALICIA HAS ALWAYS HAD A GIFT FOR BRINGING OUT THE INNERMOST SELF, JEN.
AN ADVANTAGE--PROBABLY THE ONLY ADVANTAGE--TO BEING BLIND, SUSAN. I'M FORCED BY MY DISABILITY TO GO BEYOND MERE SURFACE FEATURES. I TRY TO SCULPT THE SOUL.

MAKES ME WISH I'D ASKED YOU TO DO A BUST OF ME AS JENNIFER WALTERS.
IT'D HAVE BEEN NICE TO HAVE AROUND, NOW THAT I CAN NO LONGER...*
...ALICIA...
* FOR THE REST OF THIS SENTENCE, SEE THE SENSATIONAL SHE-HULK, MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL #18!

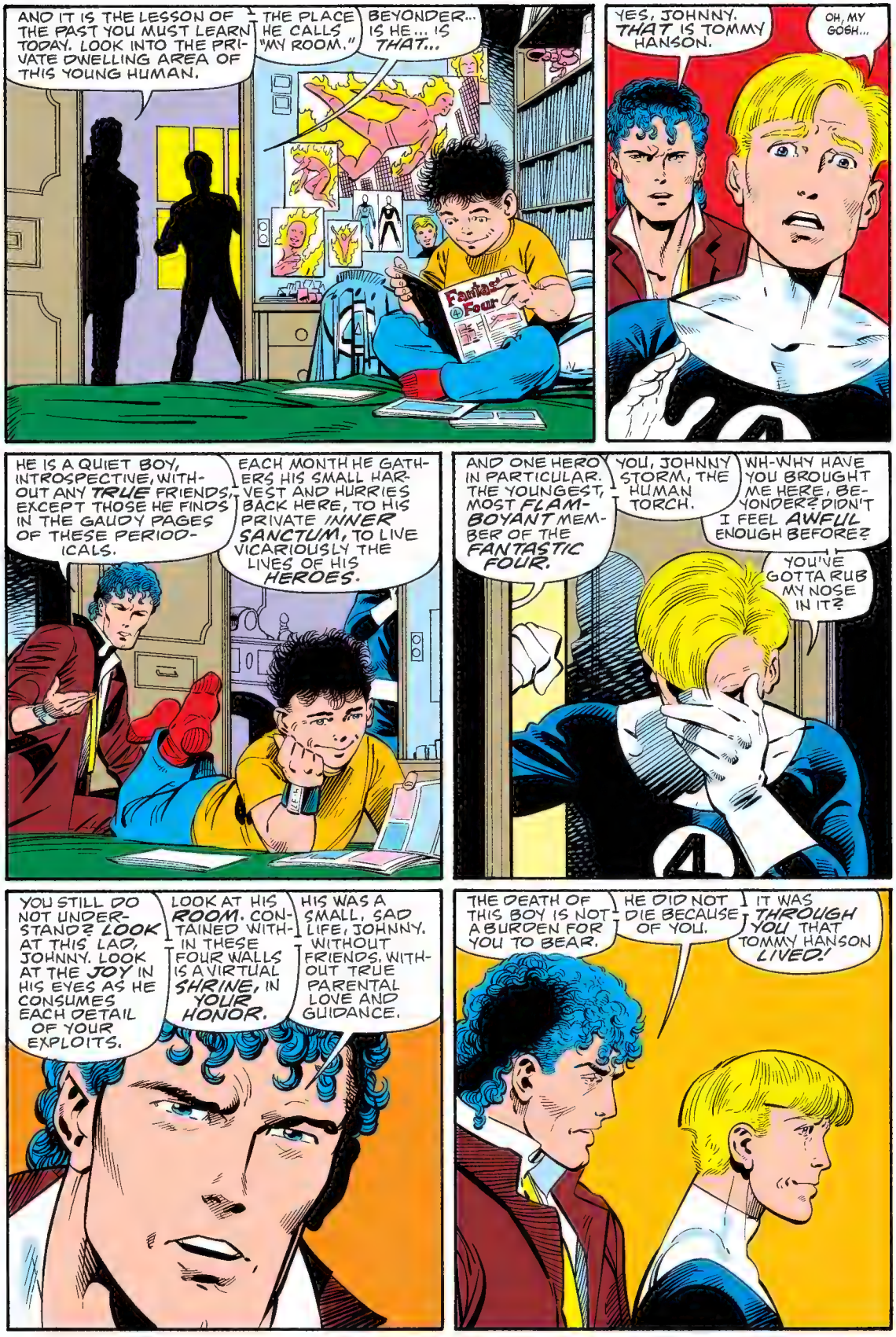

JOHNNY? IS THAT YOU?
WHAT'S WRONG, MY LOVE? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
I... I...
JOHNNY, YOU LOOK LIKE DEATH! WHAT'S THE MATTER?

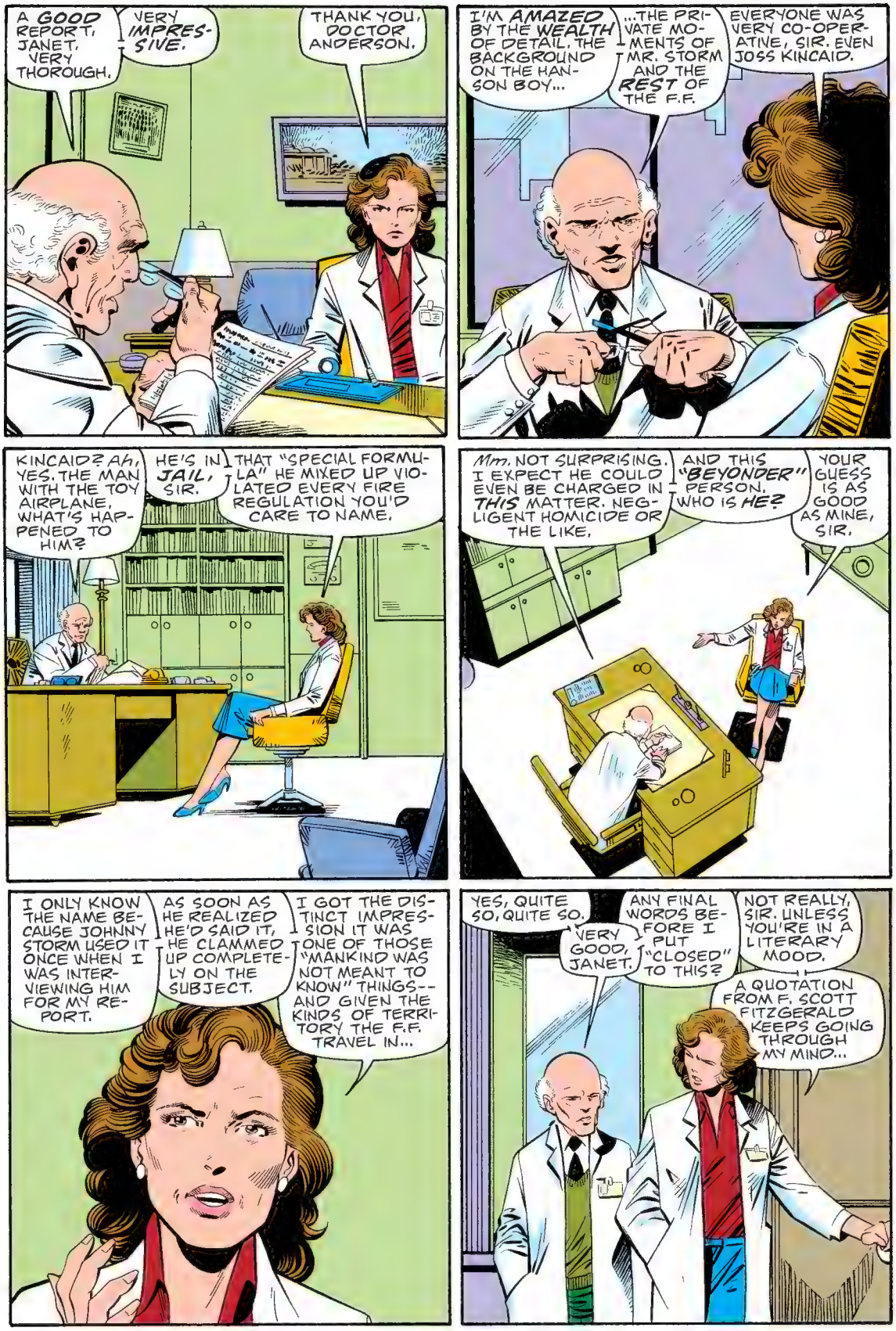
GOOD CHOICE OF WORDS, SIS.
WHY SHOULDN'T I LOOK LIKE DEATH?
THAT'S WHAT I AM! DEATH ON TWO LEGS. DEATH, THE HOTSHOT SUPERHERO!


SHE-HULK, THAT POT OF TEA I MADE SHOULD HAVE STEEPED ENOUGH BY NOW. PLEASE FETCH JOHNNY A LARGE CUP.
BLACK, THREE SUGARS.
C'MON, BABY BROTHER, SIT DOWN AND TELL US WHAT HAPPENED.
WHAT'S HAPPENED? SURE. SURE, I'LL TELL YOU.
A KID DIED TODAY, SUE. DIED BECAUSE OF ME.
BECAUSE I NEVER STOPPED TO CONSIDER WHAT THE HUMAN TORCH MIGHT MEAN, OUT IN THE REAL WORLD.
I...DON'T UNDERSTAND, JOHNNY.
DON'T YOU? NO, I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T.
IT'S NOT EASY TO UNDERSTAND. THIS KID--TOMMY HANSON WAS HIS NAME--HE WAS A FAN OF MINE. A BIG FAN.
MAYBE THE BIGGEST FAN I EVER HAD.
AND A MONTH AGO HE POURED ROCKET FUEL ALL OVER HIMSELF AND PUT A MATCH TO IT.
BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE ME!
...oh...
ohh, JOHNNY!
YOU SEE NOW, SUE? YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED? WHILE WE'VE ALL BEEN RUNNING AROUND, PLAYING AT BEING HEROES...
...CHASING ALL OVER THE GALAXY, FIGHTING MENACES MOST OF THE WORLD NEVER EVEN HEARD OF...
...KIDS...PEOPLE... LIKE TOMMY HANSON HAVE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT US, LIKE WE WERE BLOODY MOVIE-STARS!
DREAMING ABOUT US. ABOUT ME. WANTING TO BE LIKE ME...
WANTING TO BE ME.
AND THAT'S WHY... WHY I CAN'T BE ME ANYMORE. I CAN'T RISK IT HAPPENING AGAIN, SUE.
FROM NOW ON THERE IS NO HUMAN TORCH... THE HUMAN TORCH IS DEAD!


THAT IS VERY FOOLISH, JOHNNY STORM. YOURS IS A GREAT POWER, A GREAT FORCE FOR LIFE!
IT SHOULD NOT BE DENIED.
WHO...?
YOU?!?
THE BE-YONDER!!
THE SAME. I HAVE SENSED YOUR DIS-TRESS. IT...INTER-ESTS ME.
I WOULD KNOW MORE OF THIS.
Yeah, WELL MAYBE JOHNNY DOESN'T WANT SOME COS-MIC SNOOP STICKING HIS NOSE INTO THIS.
YOU'VE BEEN A LOT MORE TROUBLE THAN YOU'RE POS-SIBLY WORTH, PAL. THIS IS WHERE YOU GET OFF!
GOOD WORK, SHE-HULK! REED WILL BE DELIGHTED WE'VE PINNED THIS ONE! HOLD HIM WHILE I WRAP HIM UP IN A NICE LITTLE ESCAPE-PROOF INVISI-BLE FORCE-FIELD...
HOW... SAD.
Er...YOU CAN FALL DOWN ANY TIME NOW, BIG BOY...
JOHNNY!
Hey!

Hey... WHAT GIVES? WHERE ARE WE?
ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE. LOOK ABOUT YOU, JOHNNY STORM.
THERE IS A LESSON FOR YOU HERE.
"A LESSON?!?"
OH FINE!! THAT'S JUST ABOUT ALL I NEED TODAY!
SOME GEEK WHO ISN'T EVEN HUMAN IS GONNA TEACH ME A LESSON!
WELL, NO THANKS, BUDDY! WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO BACK TO BEYOND AND LEAVE US MISERABLE HUMANS ALONE?
OR BLOW US ALL UP, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE REALLY HERE TO DO.
JUST QUIT JERKIN' US AROUND!
JOHNNY STORM...
...BEHOLD...
THAT KID. WHO...?
WAIT, WHAT GOES ON HERE?
WHY DOESN'T HE SEE US?
HE SEES ONLY HIS OWN REALITY, JOHNNY STORM, AND WE ARE NOT PART OF THAT.
IT IS THE PAST YOU SEE HERE.


AND IT IS THE LESSON OF THE PAST YOU MUST LEARN TODAY. LOOK INTO THE PRIVATE DWELLING AREA OF THIS YOUNG HUMAN.
THE PLACE HE CALLS "MY ROOM."
BEYONDER... IS HE... IS THAT...
Fantastic Four
YES, JOHNNY. THAT IS TOMMY HANSON.
OH, MY GOSH...
HE IS A QUIET BOY, INTROSPECTIVE, WITHOUT ANY TRUE FRIENDS, EXCEPT THOSE HE FINDS IN THE GAUDY PAGES OF THESE PERIODICALS.
EACH MONTH HE GATHERS HIS SMALL HARVEST AND HURRIES BACK HERE, TO HIS PRIVATE INNER SANCTUM, TO LIVE VICARIOUSLY THE LIVES OF HIS HEROES.
AND ONE HERO IN PARTICULAR. THE YOUNGEST, MOST FLAMBOYANT MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
YOU, JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH.
WH-WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE, BEYONDER? DIDN'T I FEEL AWFUL ENOUGH BEFORE?
YOU'VE GOTTA RUB MY NOSE IN IT?
YOU STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND? LOOK AT THIS LAD, JOHNNY. LOOK AT THE JOY IN HIS EYES AS HE CONSUMES EACH DETAIL OF YOUR EXPLOITS.
LOOK AT HIS ROOM. CONTAINED WITHIN THESE FOUR WALLS IS A VIRTUAL SHRINE, IN YOUR HONOR.
HIS WAS A SMALL, SAD LIFE, JOHNNY. WITHOUT FRIENDS, WITHOUT TRUE PARENTAL LOVE AND GUIDANCE.
THE DEATH OF THIS BOY IS NOT A BURDEN FOR YOU TO BEAR.
HE DID NOT DIE BECAUSE OF YOU.
IT WAS THROUGH YOU THAT TOMMY HANSON LIVED!

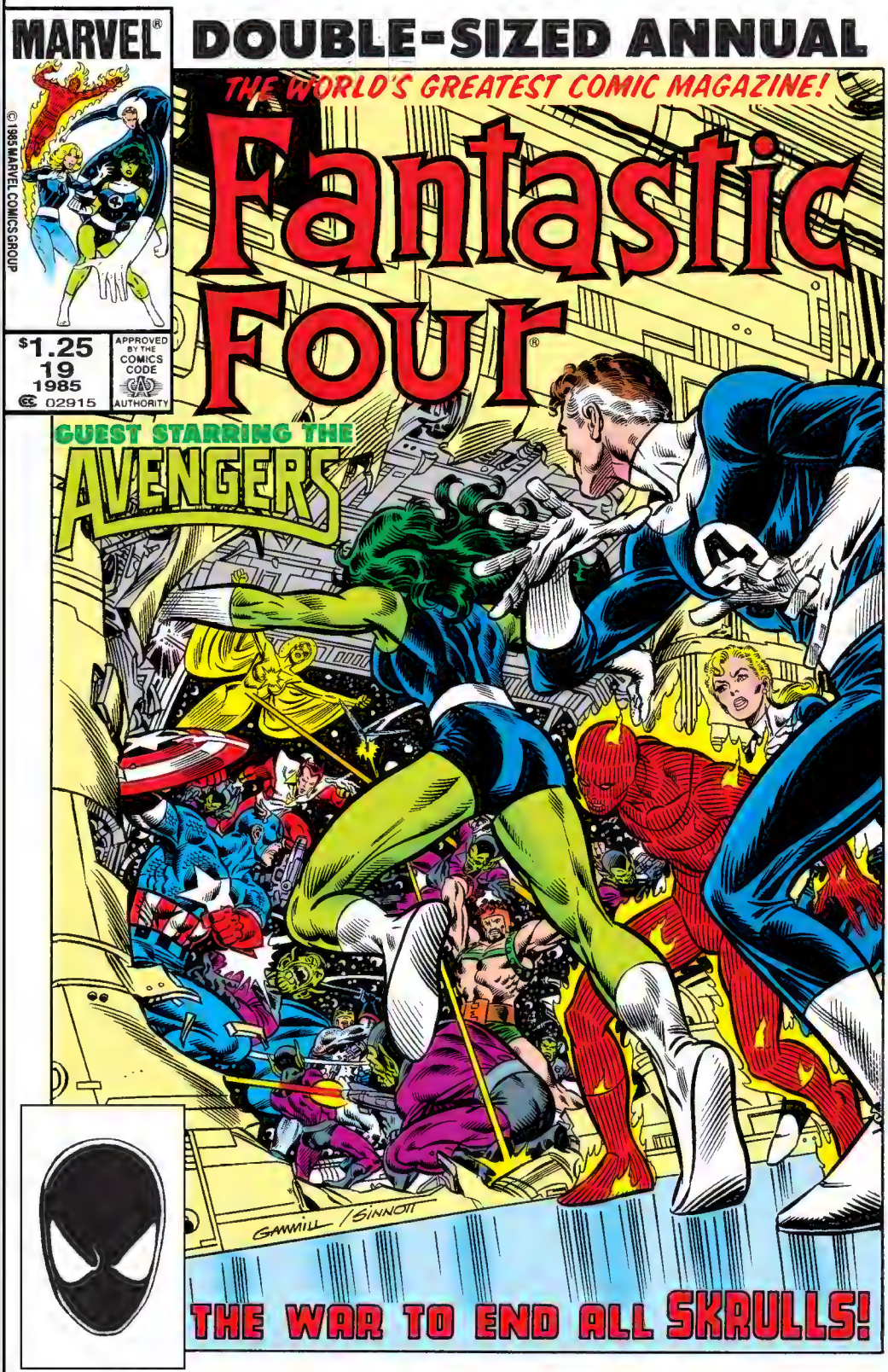

A GOOD REPORT, JANET. VERY THOROUGH.
VERY IMPRESSIVE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR ANDERSON.
I'M AMAZED BY THE WEALTH OF DETAIL. THE BACKGROUND ON THE HANSON BOY...
...THE PRIVATE MOMENTS OF MR. STORM AND THE REST OF THE F.F.
EVERYONE WAS VERY CO-OPERATIVE, SIR. EVEN JOSS KINCAID.
KINCAID? AH, YES. THE MAN WITH THE TOY AIRPLANE. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?
HE'S IN JAIL, SIR.
THAT "SPECIAL FORMULA" HE MIXED UP VIOLATED EVERY FIRE REGULATION YOU'D CARE TO NAME.
Mm. NOT SURPRISING. I EXPECT HE COULD EVEN BE CHARGED IN THIS MATTER. NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE OR THE LIKE.
AND THIS "BEYONDER" PERSON. WHO IS HE?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE, SIR.
I ONLY KNOW THE NAME BECAUSE JOHNNY STORM USED IT ONCE WHEN I WAS INTERVIEWING HIM FOR MY REPORT.
AS SOON AS HE REALIZED HE'D SAID IT, HE CLAMMED UP COMPLETELY ON THE SUBJECT.
I GOT THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION IT WAS ONE OF THOSE "MANKIND WAS NOT MEANT TO KNOW" THINGS--AND GIVEN THE KINDS OF TERRITORY THE F.F. TRAVEL IN...
YES, QUITE SO, QUITE SO.
VERY GOOD, JANET.
ANY FINAL WORDS BEFORE I PUT "CLOSED" TO THIS?
NOT REALLY, SIR. UNLESS YOU'RE IN A LITERARY MOOD.
A QUOTATION FROM F. SCOTT FITZGERALD KEEPS GOING THROUGH MY MIND...

"'SHOW ME A HERO, AND I'LL WRITE YOU A TRAGEDY.'
"THERE WAS A TRAGEDY HERE. BUT I CAN'T HELP THINKING TOMMY WOULD SAY IT HAD A HAPPY ENDING AFTER ALL..."

NEXT ISSUE: SHE "DIED" IN THE X-MEN. SHE'S COMING BACK IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

"LIKE A PHOENIX..."

IN 30 DAYS! YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT!!!



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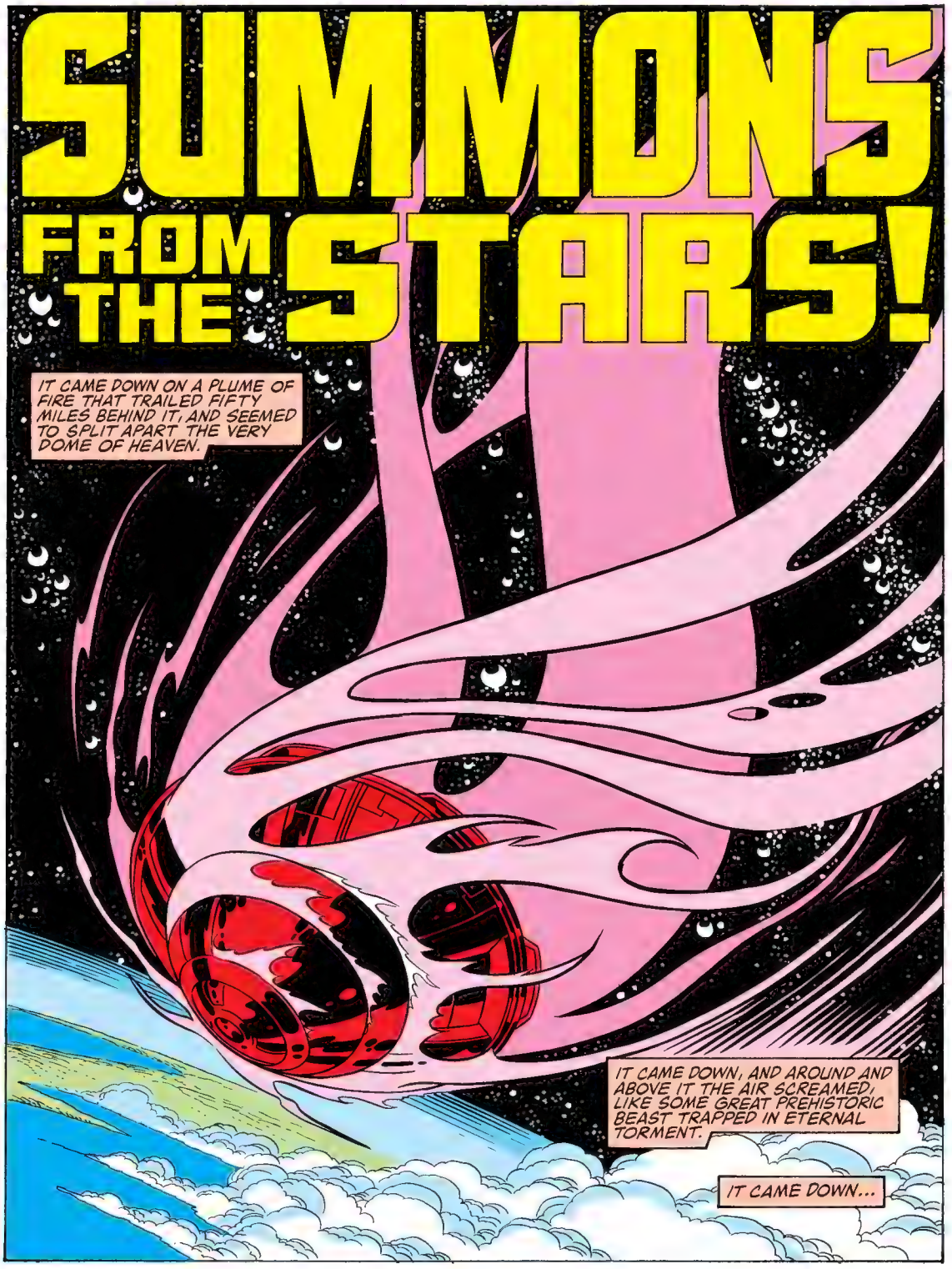
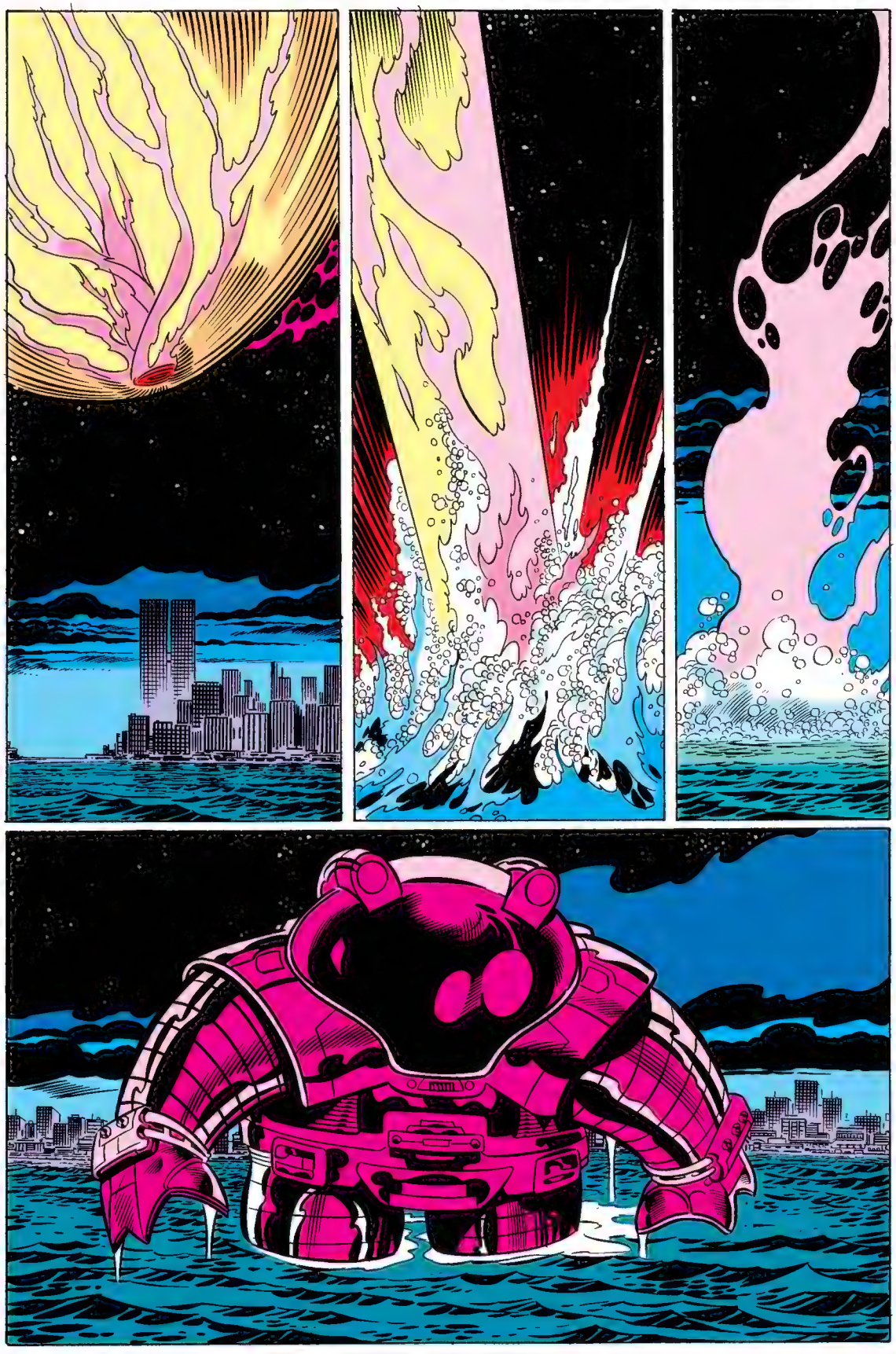
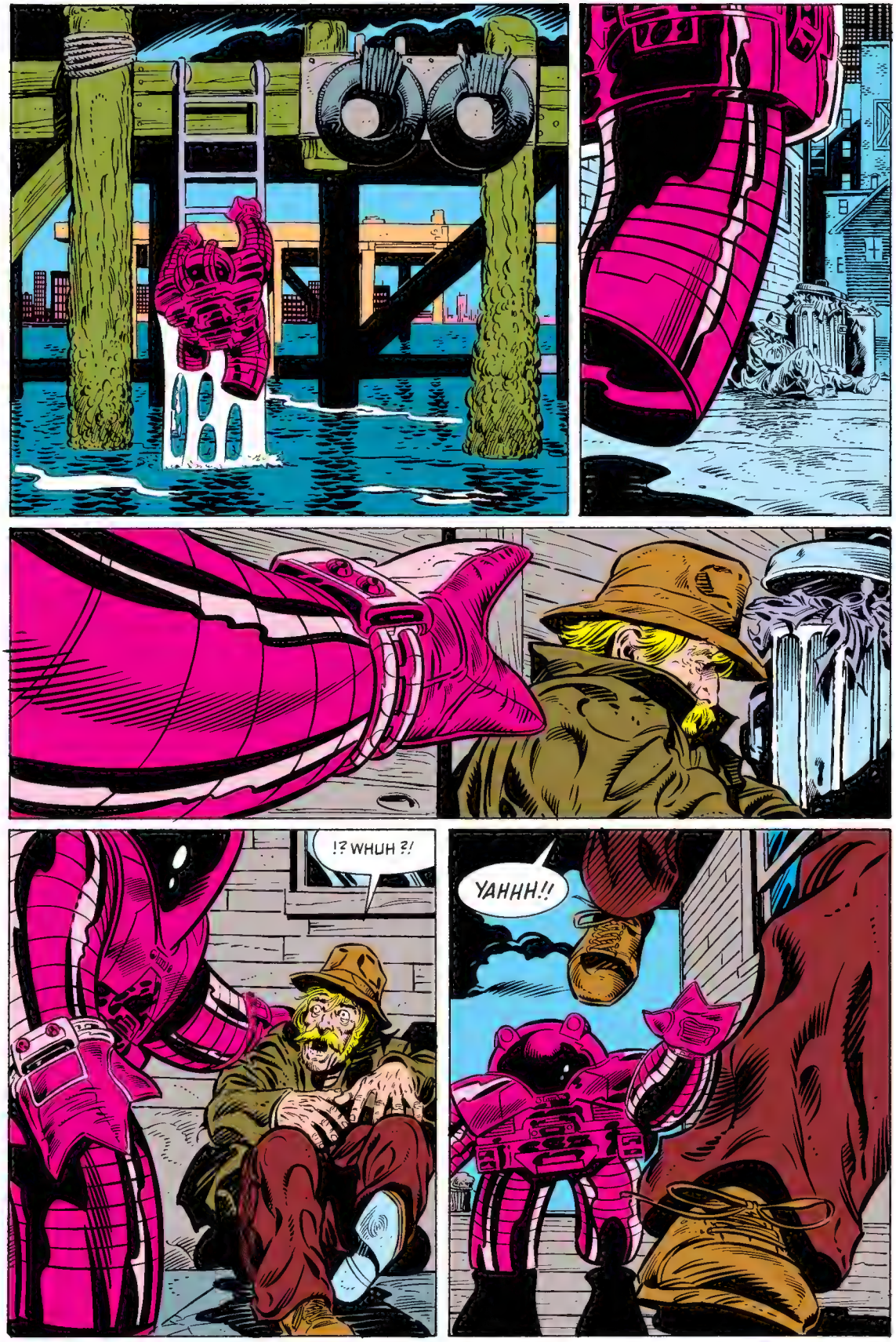
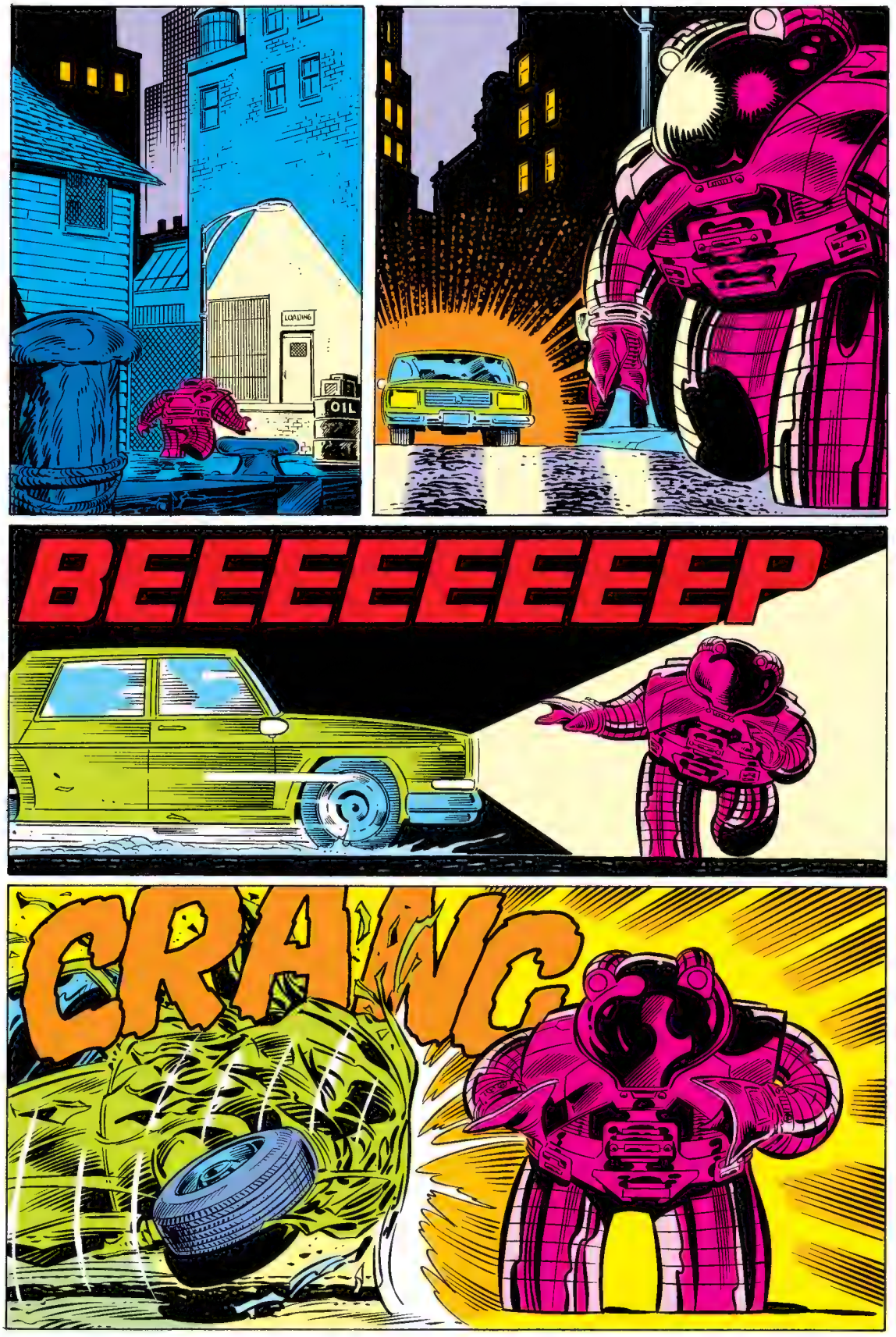
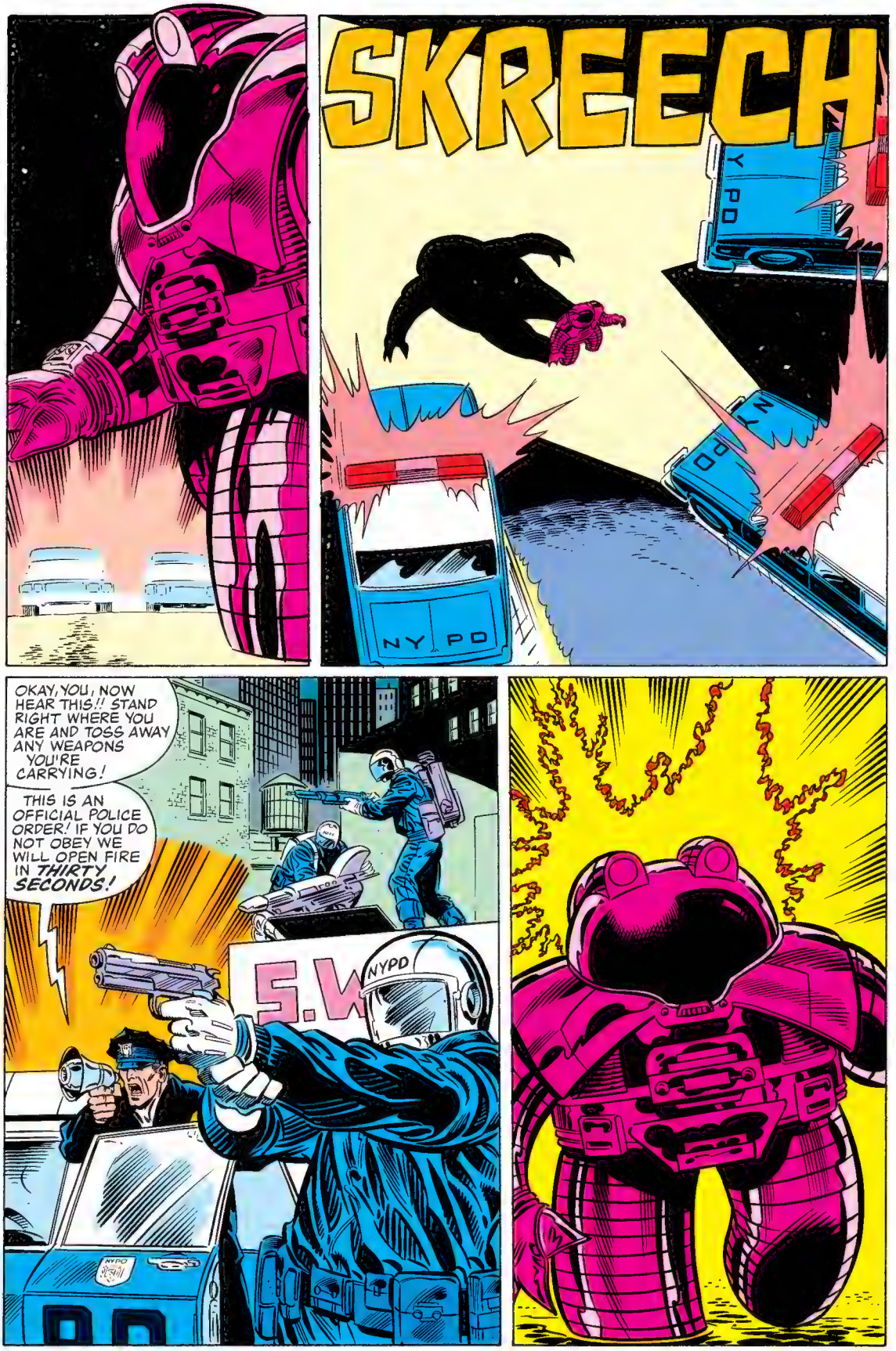

SUMMONS FROM THE STARS!
IT CAME DOWN ON A PLUME OF FIRE THAT TRAILED FIFTY MILES BEHIND IT, AND SEEMED TO SPLIT APART THE VERY DOME OF HEAVEN.
IT CAME DOWN, AND AROUND AND ABOVE IT THE AIR SCREAMED, LIKE SOME GREAT PREHISTORIC BEAST TRAPPED IN ETERNAL TORMENT.
IT CAME DOWN...

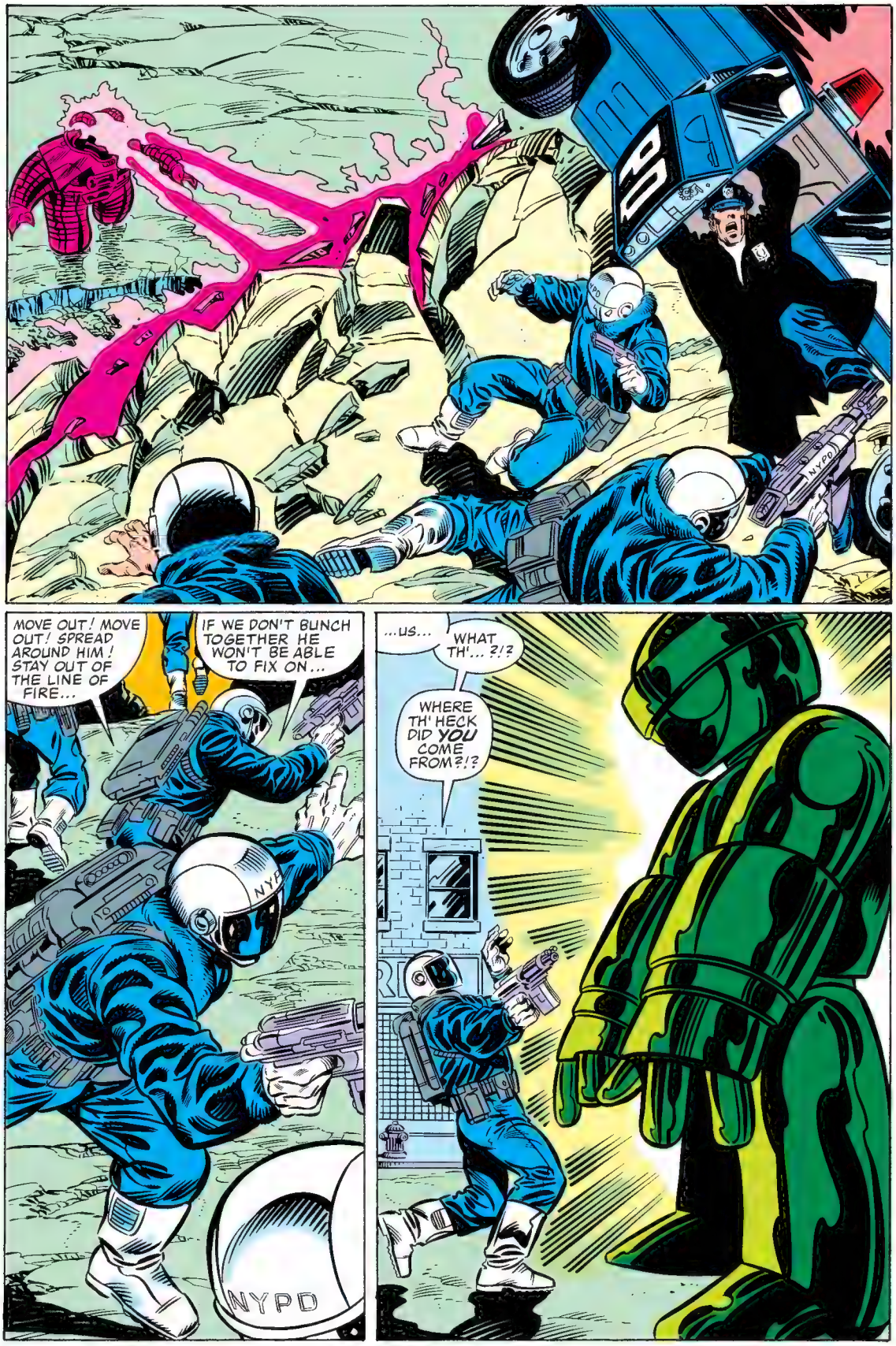



!? WHUH ?!
YAHHH!!

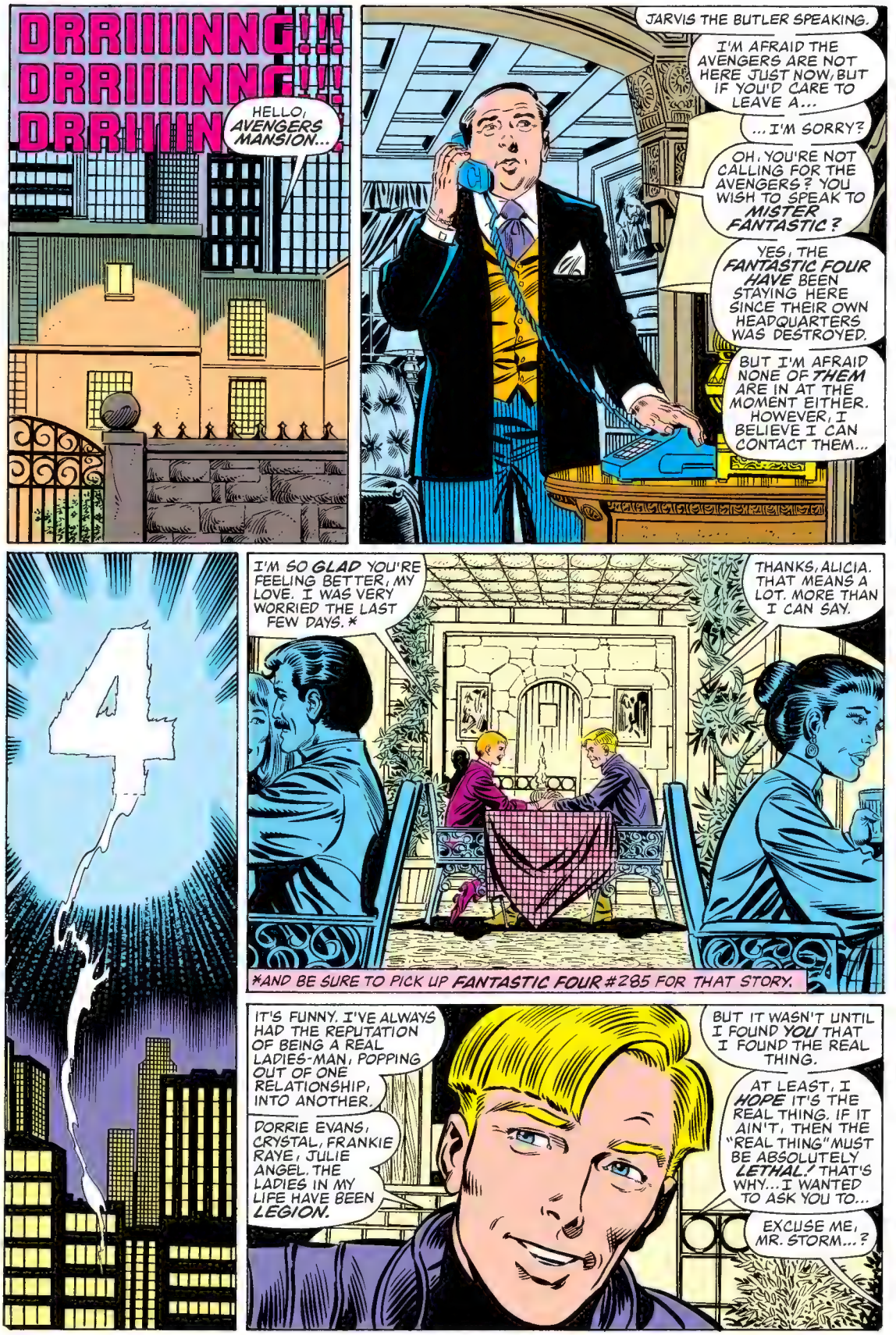

LOADING
OIL
BEEEEEEEEP
CRAANG

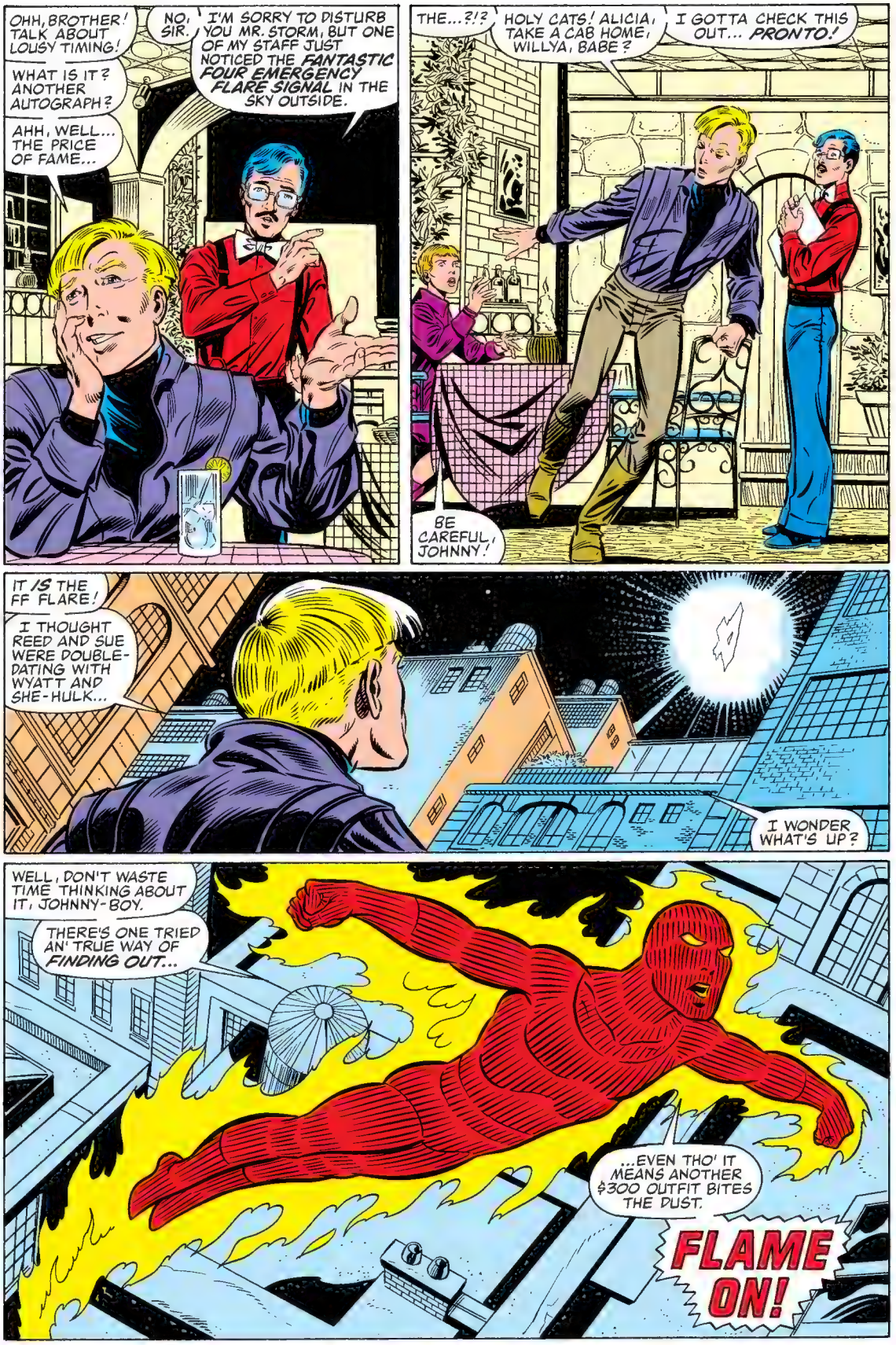
A PHONE!
OH, THANK GOD!
NOW, PLEASE DON'T LET IT BE OUT OF ORDER!
IT'S WORK-ING!
HELLO? HELLO POLICE? LISSEN, YOU GOTTA COME RIGHT AWAY!
WE'RE BEIN' INVADED!!
NO! NO, I'M NOT KIDDING AND I'M NOT STONED! MY CAR JUST GOT WRECKED...
...BY AN ALIEN!!!!
WEEOWEEOWEEOWEEOWEE
SKEEEEEEEEEE

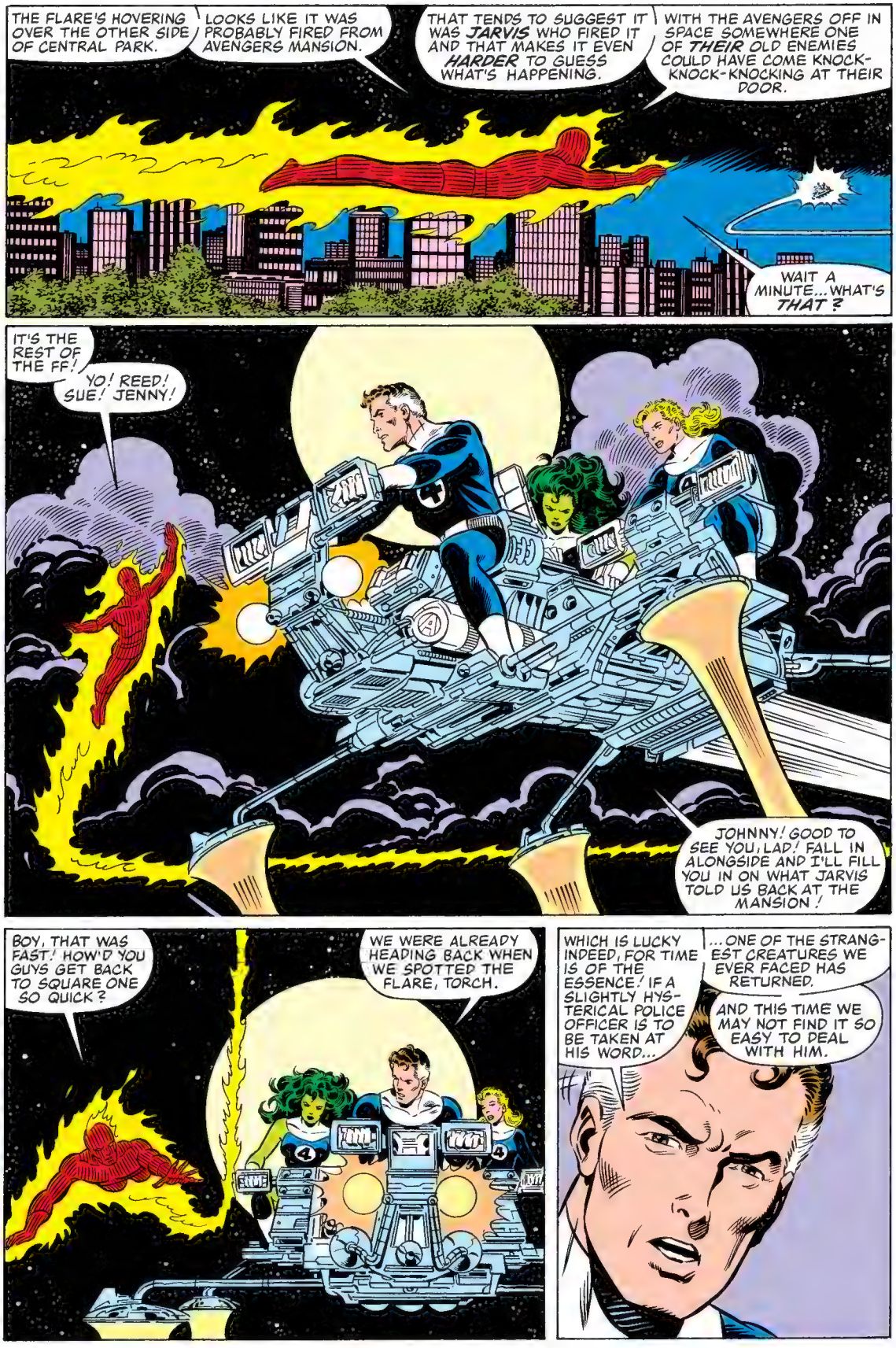

SKREECH
NY PD
OKAY, YOU, NOW HEAR THIS!! STAND RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE AND TOSS AWAY ANY WEAPONS YOU'RE CARRYING!
THIS IS AN OFFICIAL POLICE ORDER! IF YOU DO NOT OBEY WE WILL OPEN FIRE IN THIRTY SECONDS!
S.W
NYPD

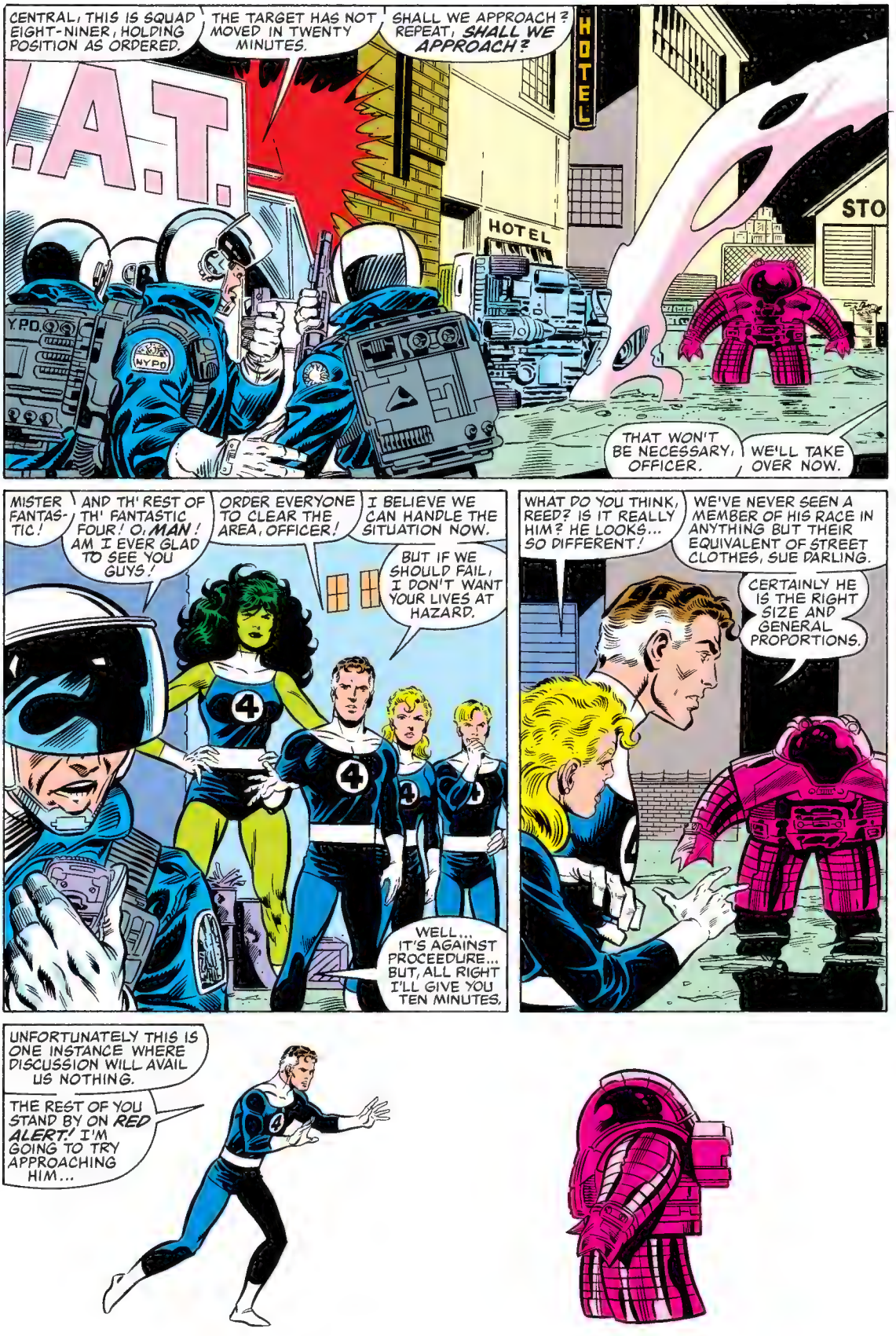

MOVE OUT! MOVE OUT! SPREAD AROUND HIM! STAY OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE...
IF WE DON'T BUNCH TOGETHER HE WON'T BE ABLE TO FIX ON...
NYPD
...US...
WHAT TH'... ?!?
WHERE TH' HECK DID YOU COME FROM?!?

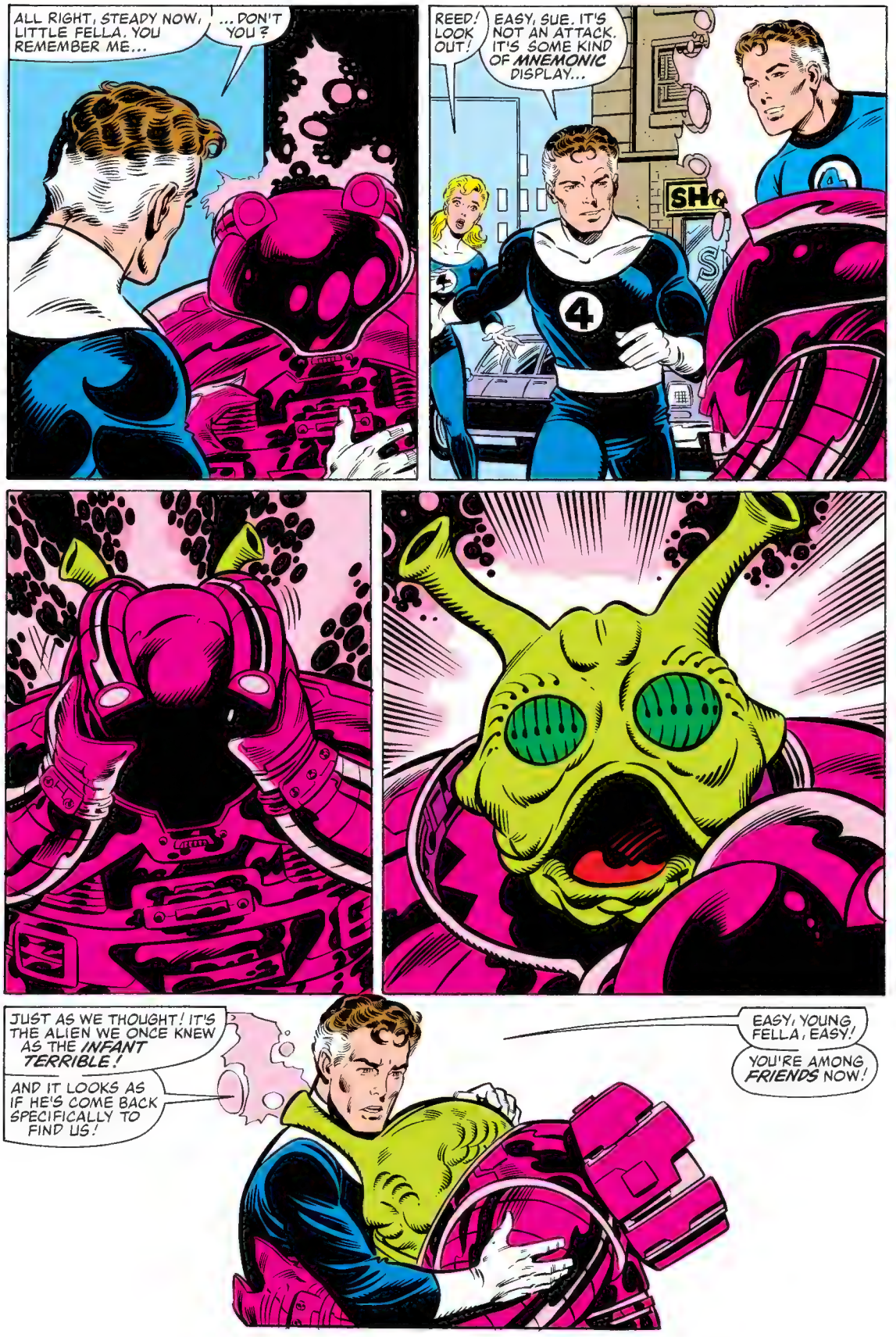
WELL... IT DON'T MATTER, 'CAUSE YOU AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERES!
CHOM CHOM CHO
HUH?
WHAT GIVES? NOW THERE'S A DOZEN OF YA???
SARGE! SARGE, HOLD IT! DON'T SHOOT AT 'EM NO MORE! THEY AIN'T DOIN' NOTHIN' BUT STANDIN' THERE, AND SHOOTIN' 'EM'S WHAT'S MAKIN' 'EM MULTIPLY!
HUH?? IF YOU SAY SO, RIDDLEY. YOU BIN IN NEW YORK ALL YER LIFE. I'M NEW IN THIS TOWN.
AN' NEW TA THIS KINDA PROBLEM.
YOU GOT YERSELF SOME KINDA IDEA WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
NYPD
NYPD
I AIN'T SURE, SARGE. BUT THERE'S SOMETHIN' FAMILIAR ABOUT THESE BIG BOZOS.
AN'... THAT ALIEN. IF ONLY I COULD REMEMBER...
SOMETHIN' FROM YEARS BACK. WHEN I WUZ JUST A ROOKIE...
JUST A KID...
...A... KID...
HOLY CATS! THAT'S IT.!! SARGE, TELL THE OTHERS NOT TA DO ANYTHING BUT WATCH THAT ALIEN.
I THINK I KNOW WHAT'S GOIN' ON.
AN' IF I'M RIGHT I KNOW WHO WE GOTTA CALL...
...AN' IT SURE AIN'T GHOST-BUSTERS.!!
NYPD


DRRIIIINNG!!!
DRRIIIINNG!!!
DRRIIIN
HELLO, AVENGERS MANSION...
JARVIS THE BUTLER SPEAKING.
I'M AFRAID THE AVENGERS ARE NOT HERE JUST NOW, BUT IF YOU'D CARE TO LEAVE A...
...I'M SORRY?
OH. YOU'RE NOT CALLING FOR THE AVENGERS? YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO MISTER FANTASTIC?
YES, THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE BEEN STAYING HERE SINCE THEIR OWN HEADQUARTERS WAS DESTROYED.
BUT I'M AFRAID NONE OF THEM ARE IN AT THE MOMENT EITHER. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE I CAN CONTACT THEM...
4
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE FEELING BETTER, MY LOVE. I WAS VERY WORRIED THE LAST FEW DAYS. *
THANKS, ALICIA. THAT MEANS A LOT. MORE THAN I CAN SAY.
*AND BE SURE TO PICK UP FANTASTIC FOUR #285 FOR THAT STORY.
IT'S FUNNY. I'VE ALWAYS HAD THE REPUTATION OF BEING A REAL LADIES-MAN, POPPING OUT OF ONE RELATIONSHIP, INTO ANOTHER.
DORRIE EVANS, CRYSTAL, FRANKIE RAYE, JULIE ANGEL. THE LADIES IN MY LIFE HAVE BEEN LEGION.
BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL I FOUND YOU THAT I FOUND THE REAL THING.
AT LEAST, I HOPE IT'S THE REAL THING. IF IT AIN'T, THEN THE "REAL THING" MUST BE ABSOLUTELY LETHAL! THAT'S WHY... I WANTED TO ASK YOU TO...
EXCUSE ME, MR. STORM...?

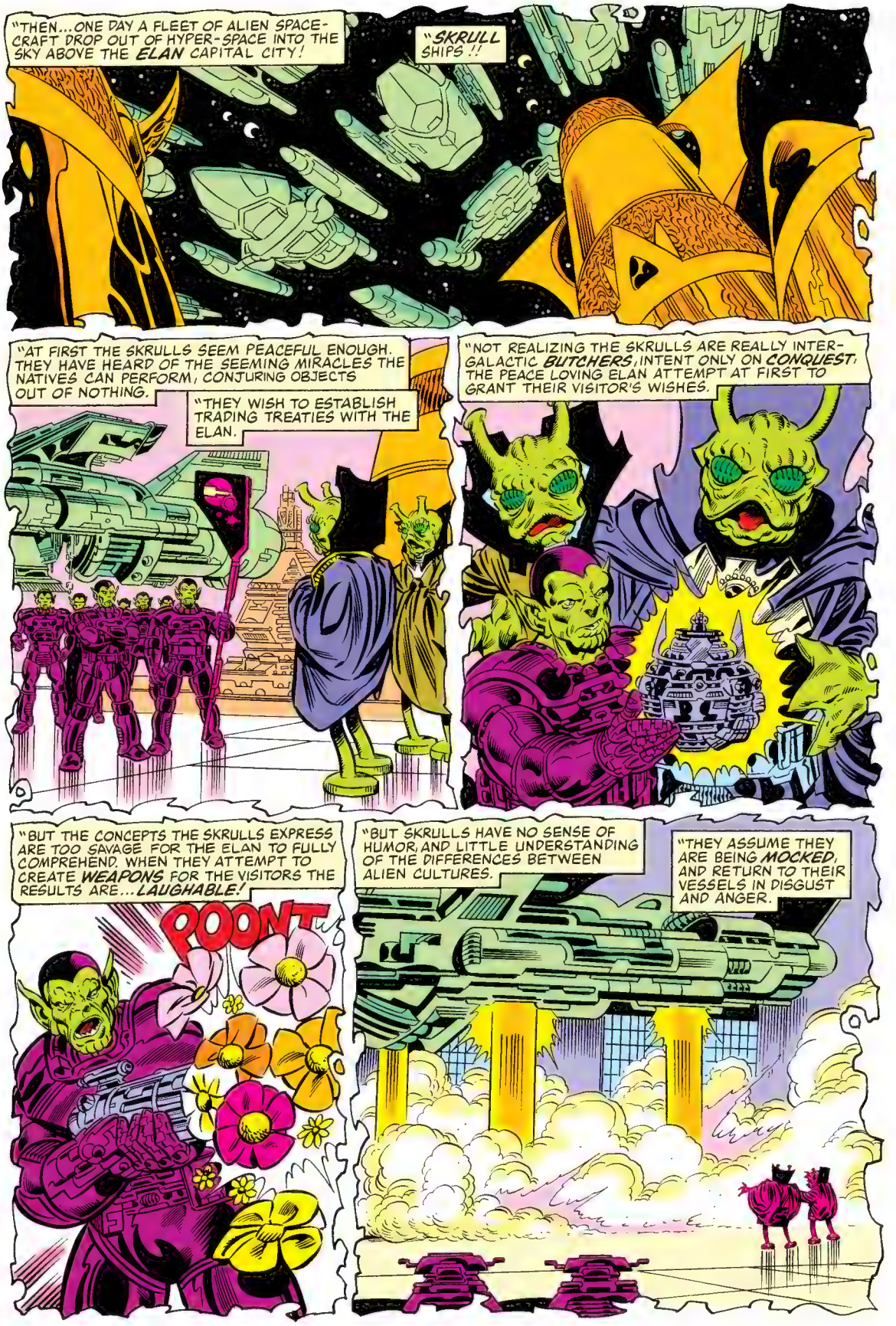

OHH, BROTHER! TALK ABOUT LOUSY TIMING!
NO, SIR.
I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU MR. STORM, BUT ONE OF MY STAFF JUST NOTICED THE FANTASTIC FOUR EMERGENCY FLARE SIGNAL IN THE SKY OUTSIDE.
WHAT IS IT? ANOTHER AUTOGRAPH?
AHH, WELL... THE PRICE OF FAME...
THE...?!?
HOLY CATS! ALICIA, TAKE A CAB HOME, WILLYA, BABE?
I GOTTA CHECK THIS OUT... PRONTO!
BE CAREFUL, JOHNNY!
IT IS THE FF FLARE!
I THOUGHT REED AND SUE WERE DOUBLE-DATING WITH WYATT AND SHE-HULK...
I WONDER WHAT'S UP?
WELL, DON'T WASTE TIME THINKING ABOUT IT, JOHNNY-BOY.
THERE'S ONE TRIED AN' TRUE WAY OF FINDING OUT...
...EVEN THO' IT MEANS ANOTHER $300 OUTFIT BITES THE DUST.
FLAME ON!

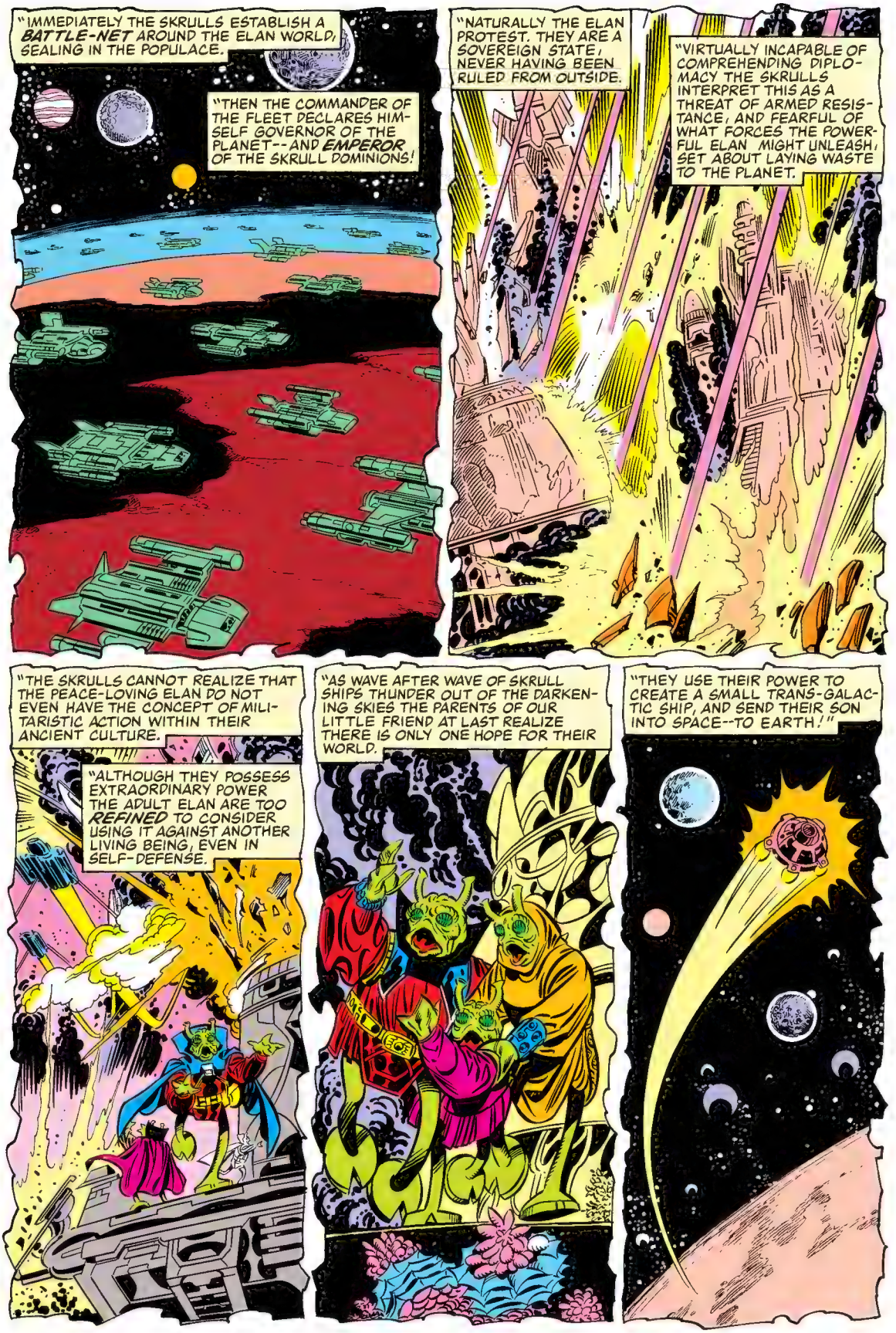

THE FLARE'S HOVERING OVER THE OTHER SIDE OF CENTRAL PARK.
LOOKS LIKE IT WAS PROBABLY FIRED FROM AVENGERS MANSION.
THAT TENDS TO SUGGEST IT WAS JARVIS WHO FIRED IT AND THAT MAKES IT EVEN HARDER TO GUESS WHAT'S HAPPENING.
WITH THE AVENGERS OFF IN SPACE SOMEWHERE ONE OF THEIR OLD ENEMIES COULD HAVE COME KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCKING AT THEIR DOOR.
WAIT A MINUTE... WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S THE REST OF THE FF!
YO! REED! SUE! JENNY!
JOHNNY! GOOD TO SEE YOU, LAD! FALL IN ALONGSIDE AND I'LL FILL YOU IN ON WHAT JARVIS TOLD US BACK AT THE MANSION!
BOY, THAT WAS FAST! HOW'D YOU GUYS GET BACK TO SQUARE ONE SO QUICK?
WE WERE ALREADY HEADING BACK WHEN WE SPOTTED THE FLARE, TORCH.
WHICH IS LUCKY INDEED, FOR TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE! IF A SLIGHTLY HYSTERICAL POLICE OFFICER IS TO BE TAKEN AT HIS WORD...
...ONE OF THE STRANGEST CREATURES WE EVER FACED HAS RETURNED.
AND THIS TIME WE MAY NOT FIND IT SO EASY TO DEAL WITH HIM.

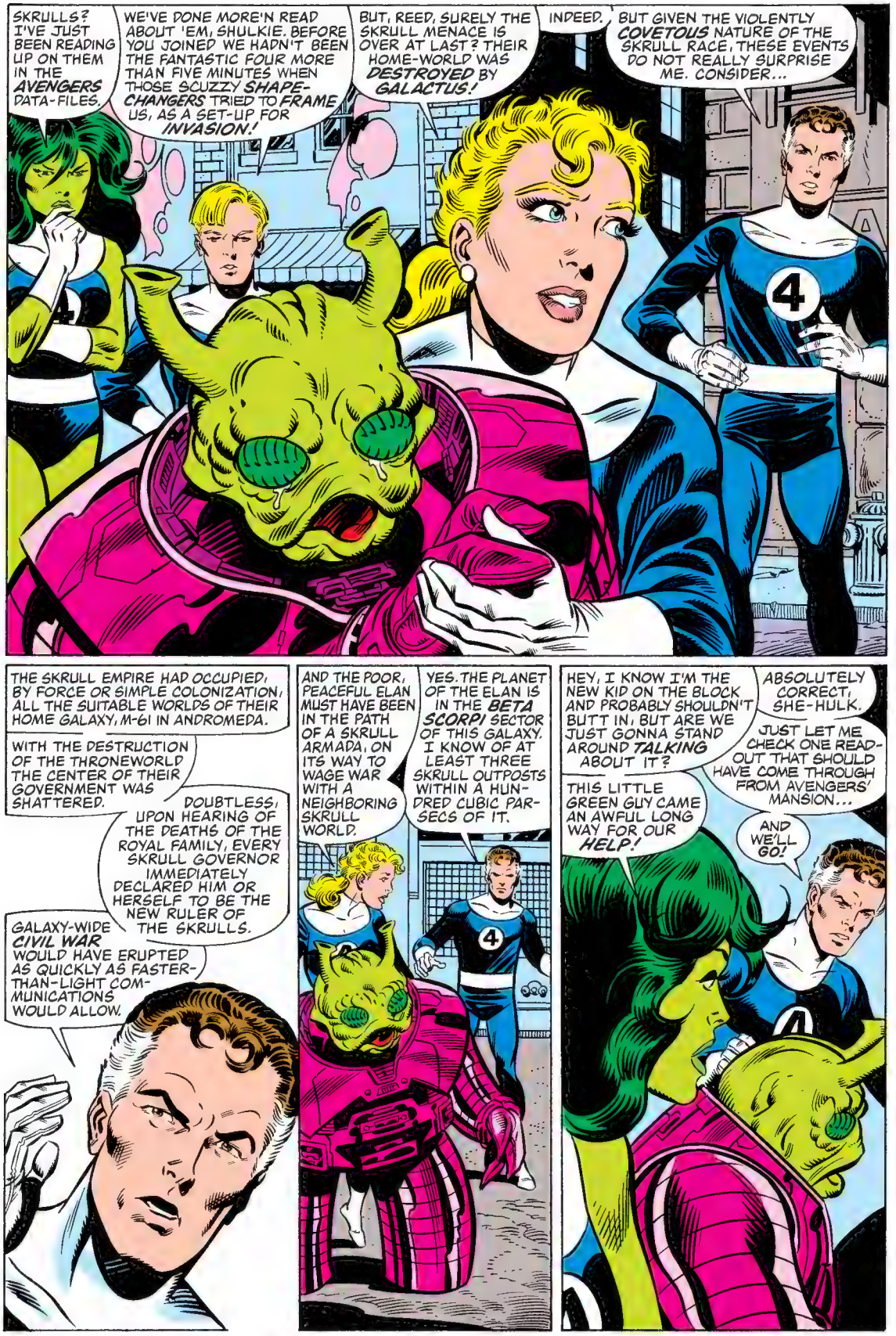

CENTRAL, THIS IS SQUAD EIGHT-NINER, HOLDING POSITION AS ORDERED.
THE TARGET HAS NOT MOVED IN TWENTY MINUTES.
SHALL WE APPROACH? REPEAT, SHALL WE APPROACH?
.A.T.
HOTEL
HOTEL
STO
Y.P.D.
NYPD
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, OFFICER.
WE'LL TAKE OVER NOW.
MISTER FANTASTIC!
AND TH' REST OF TH' FANTASTIC FOUR! O, MAN! AM I EVER GLAD TO SEE YOU GUYS!
ORDER EVERYONE TO CLEAR THE AREA, OFFICER!
I BELIEVE WE CAN HANDLE THE SITUATION NOW.
BUT IF WE SHOULD FAIL, I DON'T WANT YOUR LIVES AT HAZARD.
WELL... IT'S AGAINST PROCEEDURE... BUT, ALL RIGHT I'LL GIVE YOU TEN MINUTES.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, REED? IS IT REALLY HIM? HE LOOKS... SO DIFFERENT!
WE'VE NEVER SEEN A MEMBER OF HIS RACE IN ANYTHING BUT THEIR EQUIVALENT OF STREET CLOTHES, SUE DARLING.
CERTAINLY HE IS THE RIGHT SIZE AND GENERAL PROPORTIONS.
UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS ONE INSTANCE WHERE DISCUSSION WILL AVAIL US NOTHING.
THE REST OF YOU STAND BY ON RED ALERT! I'M GOING TO TRY APPROACHING HIM...

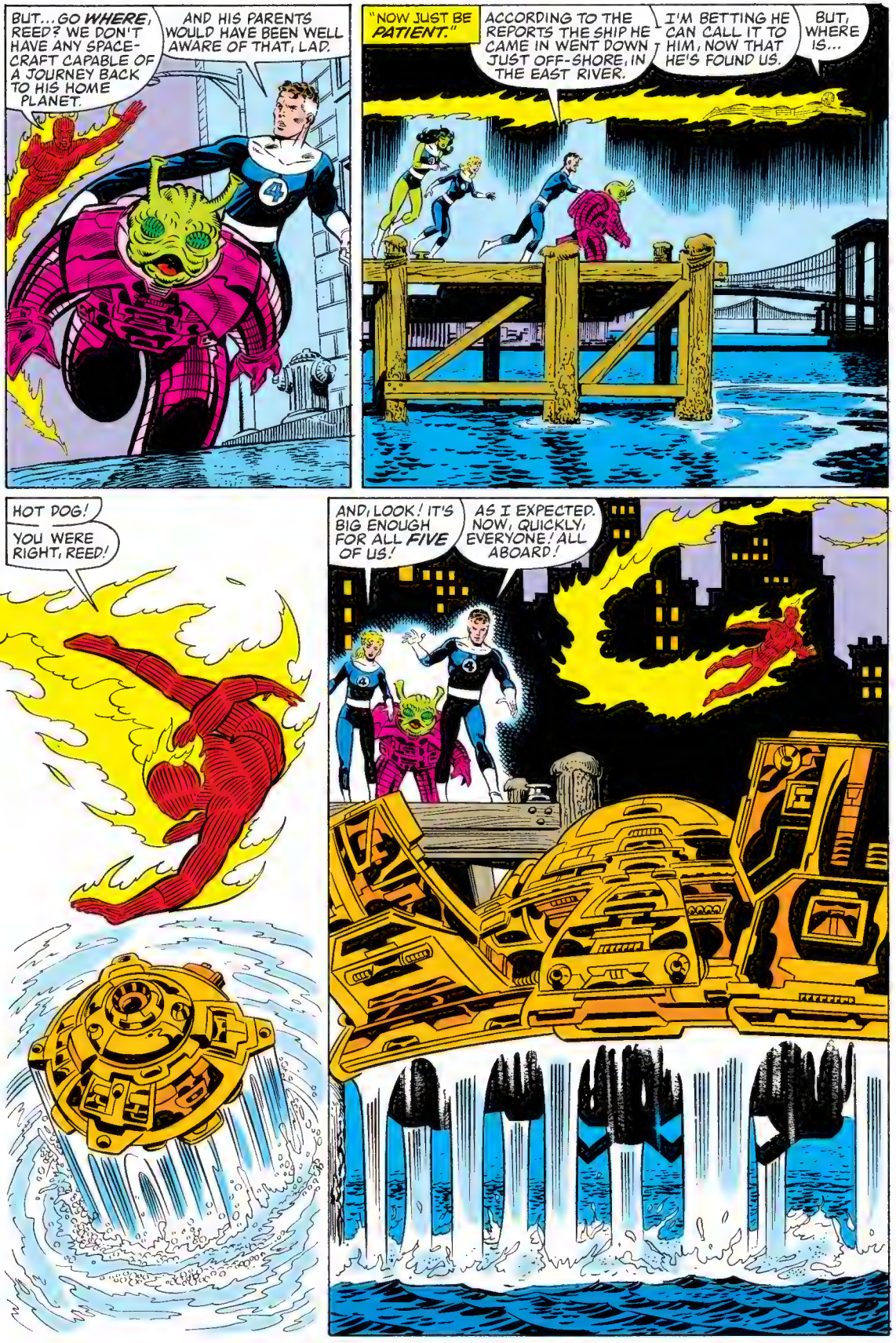

ALL RIGHT, STEADY NOW, LITTLE FELLA. YOU REMEMBER ME...
...DON'T YOU?
REED! LOOK OUT!
EASY, SUE. IT'S NOT AN ATTACK. IT'S SOME KIND OF MNEMONIC DISPLAY...
SHE
JUST AS WE THOUGHT! IT'S THE ALIEN WE ONCE KNEW AS THE INFANT TERRIBLE!
AND IT LOOKS AS IF HE'S COME BACK SPECIFICALLY TO FIND US!
EASY, YOUNG FELLA, EASY!
YOU'RE AMONG FRIENDS NOW!

SO... HE'S JUST A KID? AN ALIEN CHILD, WITH SO MUCH POWER?
YEAH. WE FIRST MET HIM A FEW YEARS BACK, WHEN HE'D WANDERED AWAY FROM HIS PARENTS AND SOMEHOW WOUND UP ON EARTH.
IT WAS PRETTY HAIRY FOR A WHILE, UNTIL REED FIGURED OUT A WAY TO CALL MOM AN' DAD TO COME PICK UP JUNIOR.
ANDRE
BUT, REED, WHAT CAN HAVE BROUGHT HIM BACK NOW? HE SEEMS TO BE SO... FRIGHTENED!
HOW CAN WE FIND OUT WHAT'S WRONG? HIS PEOPLE HAVE NO SPOKEN LANGUAGE.
THAT'S VERY TRUE, SUSAN. ABLE TO INSTANTLY TRANSLATE THEIR THOUGHTS INTO CONCRETE REALITY, HIS RACE HAS NEVER EVOLVED A NEED FOR SPEECH.
YET THERE MUST BE SOME WAY HE CAN TELL US...
WAIT! LOOK!
OF COURSE! HE'S USING MEMORY PROJECTION TO SHOW US WHY HE'S HERE!
THAT MUST BE HIS HOME STAR-SYSTEM.
"YES, AS I HAD DEDUCED, A PEACEFUL, TRANQUIL SOCIETY, FAR BEYOND THE LEVEL OF OUR EARTHLY CIVILIZATIONS.
"A WORLD WITHOUT WAR, OR EVEN WEAPONS, WITHOUT GREED OR POVERTY, WHERE EVERY WISH IS INSTANTLY GRATIFIED!


"THEN...ONE DAY A FLEET OF ALIEN SPACE-CRAFT DROP OUT OF HYPER-SPACE INTO THE SKY ABOVE THE ELAN CAPITAL CITY!
"SKRULL SHIPS!!
"AT FIRST THE SKRULLS SEEM PEACEFUL ENOUGH. THEY HAVE HEARD OF THE SEEMING MIRACLES THE NATIVES CAN PERFORM, CONJURING OBJECTS OUT OF NOTHING.
"THEY WISH TO ESTABLISH TRADING TREATIES WITH THE ELAN.
"NOT REALIZING THE SKRULLS ARE REALLY INTER-GALACTIC BUTCHERS, INTENT ONLY ON CONQUEST, THE PEACE LOVING ELAN ATTEMPT AT FIRST TO GRANT THEIR VISITOR'S WISHES.
"BUT THE CONCEPTS THE SKRULLS EXPRESS ARE TOO SAVAGE FOR THE ELAN TO FULLY COMPREHEND. WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO CREATE WEAPONS FOR THE VISITORS THE RESULTS ARE...LAUGHABLE!
POONT
"BUT SKRULLS HAVE NO SENSE OF HUMOR, AND LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ALIEN CULTURES.
"THEY ASSUME THEY ARE BEING MOCKED, AND RETURN TO THEIR VESSELS IN DISGUST AND ANGER.


"IMMEDIATELY THE SKRULLS ESTABLISH A BATTLE-NET AROUND THE ELAN WORLD, SEALING IN THE POPULACE.
"THEN THE COMMANDER OF THE FLEET DECLARES HIMSELF GOVERNOR OF THE PLANET--AND EMPEROR OF THE SKRULL DOMINIONS!
"NATURALLY THE ELAN PROTEST. THEY ARE A SOVEREIGN STATE, NEVER HAVING BEEN RULED FROM OUTSIDE.
"VIRTUALLY INCAPABLE OF COMPREHENDING DIPLOMACY THE SKRULLS INTERPRET THIS AS A THREAT OF ARMED RESISTANCE, AND FEARFUL OF WHAT FORCES THE POWERFUL ELAN MIGHT UNLEASH, SET ABOUT LAYING WASTE TO THE PLANET.
"THE SKRULLS CANNOT REALIZE THAT THE PEACE-LOVING ELAN DO NOT EVEN HAVE THE CONCEPT OF MILITARISTIC ACTION WITHIN THEIR ANCIENT CULTURE.
"ALTHOUGH THEY POSSESS EXTRAORDINARY POWER THE ADULT ELAN ARE TOO REFINED TO CONSIDER USING IT AGAINST ANOTHER LIVING BEING, EVEN IN SELF-DEFENSE.
"AS WAVE AFTER WAVE OF SKRULL SHIPS THUNDER OUT OF THE DARKENING SKIES THE PARENTS OF OUR LITTLE FRIEND AT LAST REALIZE THERE IS ONLY ONE HOPE FOR THEIR WORLD.
"THEY USE THEIR POWER TO CREATE A SMALL TRANS-GALACTIC SHIP, AND SEND THEIR SON INTO SPACE--TO EARTH!"


SKRULLS? I'VE JUST BEEN READING UP ON THEM IN THE AVENGERS DATA-FILES.
WE'VE DONE MORE'N READ ABOUT 'EM, SHULKIE. BEFORE YOU JOINED WE HADN'T BEEN THE FANTASTIC FOUR MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES WHEN THOSE SCUZZY SHAPE-CHANGERS TRIED TO FRAME US, AS A SET-UP FOR INVASION!
BUT, REED, SURELY THE SKRULL MENACE IS OVER AT LAST? THEIR HOME-WORLD WAS DESTROYED BY GALACTUS!
INDEED.
BUT GIVEN THE VIOLENTLY COVETOUS NATURE OF THE SKRULL RACE, THESE EVENTS DO NOT REALLY SURPRISE ME. CONSIDER...
THE SKRULL EMPIRE HAD OCCUPIED, BY FORCE OR SIMPLE COLONIZATION, ALL THE SUITABLE WORLDS OF THEIR HOME GALAXY, M-61 IN ANDROMEDA.
WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF THE THRONEWORLD THE CENTER OF THEIR GOVERNMENT WAS SHATTERED.
DOUBTLESS, UPON HEARING OF THE DEATHS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, EVERY SKRULL GOVERNOR IMMEDIATELY DECLARED HIM OR HERSELF TO BE THE NEW RULER OF THE SKRULLS.
GALAXY-WIDE CIVIL WAR WOULD HAVE ERUPTED AS QUICKLY AS FASTER-THAN-LIGHT COMMUNICATIONS WOULD ALLOW.
AND THE POOR, PEACEFUL ELAN MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE PATH OF A SKRULL ARMADA, ON ITS WAY TO WAGE WAR WITH A NEIGHBORING SKRULL WORLD.
YES. THE PLANET OF THE ELAN IS IN THE BETA SCORPI SECTOR OF THIS GALAXY. I KNOW OF AT LEAST THREE SKRULL OUTPOSTS WITHIN A HUNDRED CUBIC PARSECS OF IT.
HEY, I KNOW I'M THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK AND PROBABLY SHOULDN'T BUTT IN, BUT ARE WE JUST GONNA STAND AROUND TALKING ABOUT IT?
THIS LITTLE GREEN GUY CAME AN AWFUL LONG WAY FOR OUR HELP!
ABSOLUTELY CORRECT, SHE-HULK.
JUST LET ME CHECK ONE READ-OUT THAT SHOULD HAVE COME THROUGH FROM AVENGERS' MANSION...
AND WE'LL GO!

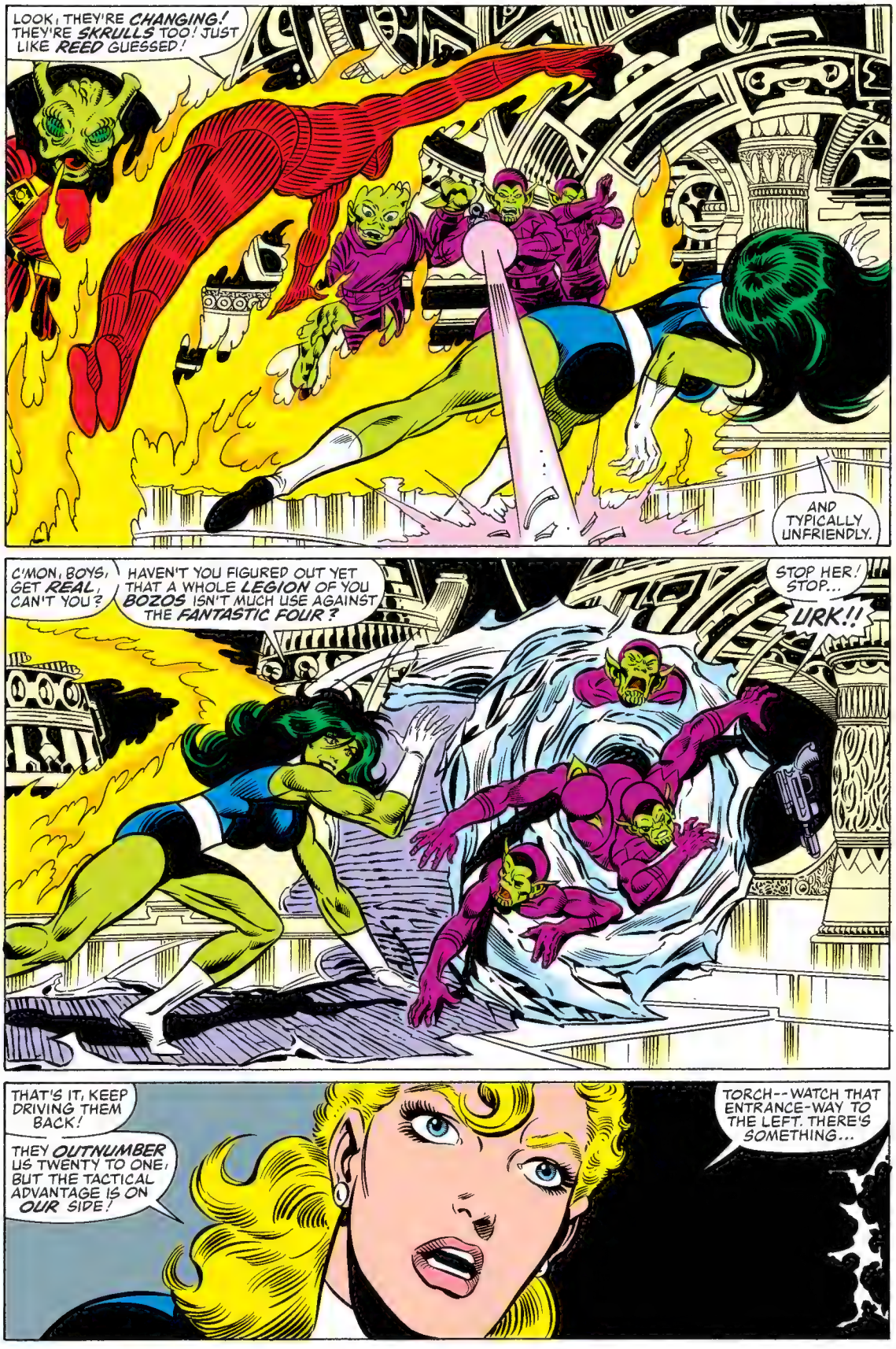

BUT... GO WHERE, REED? WE DON'T HAVE ANY SPACE-CRAFT CAPABLE OF A JOURNEY BACK TO HIS HOME PLANET.
AND HIS PARENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL AWARE OF THAT, LAD.
"NOW JUST BE PATIENT."
ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS THE SHIP HE CAME IN WENT DOWN JUST OFF-SHORE, IN THE EAST RIVER.
I'M BETTING HE CAN CALL IT TO HIM, NOW THAT HE'S FOUND US.
BUT, WHERE IS...
HOT DOG! YOU WERE RIGHT, REED!
AND, LOOK! IT'S BIG ENOUGH FOR ALL FIVE OF US!
AS I EXPECTED. NOW, QUICKLY, EVERYONE! ALL ABOARD!

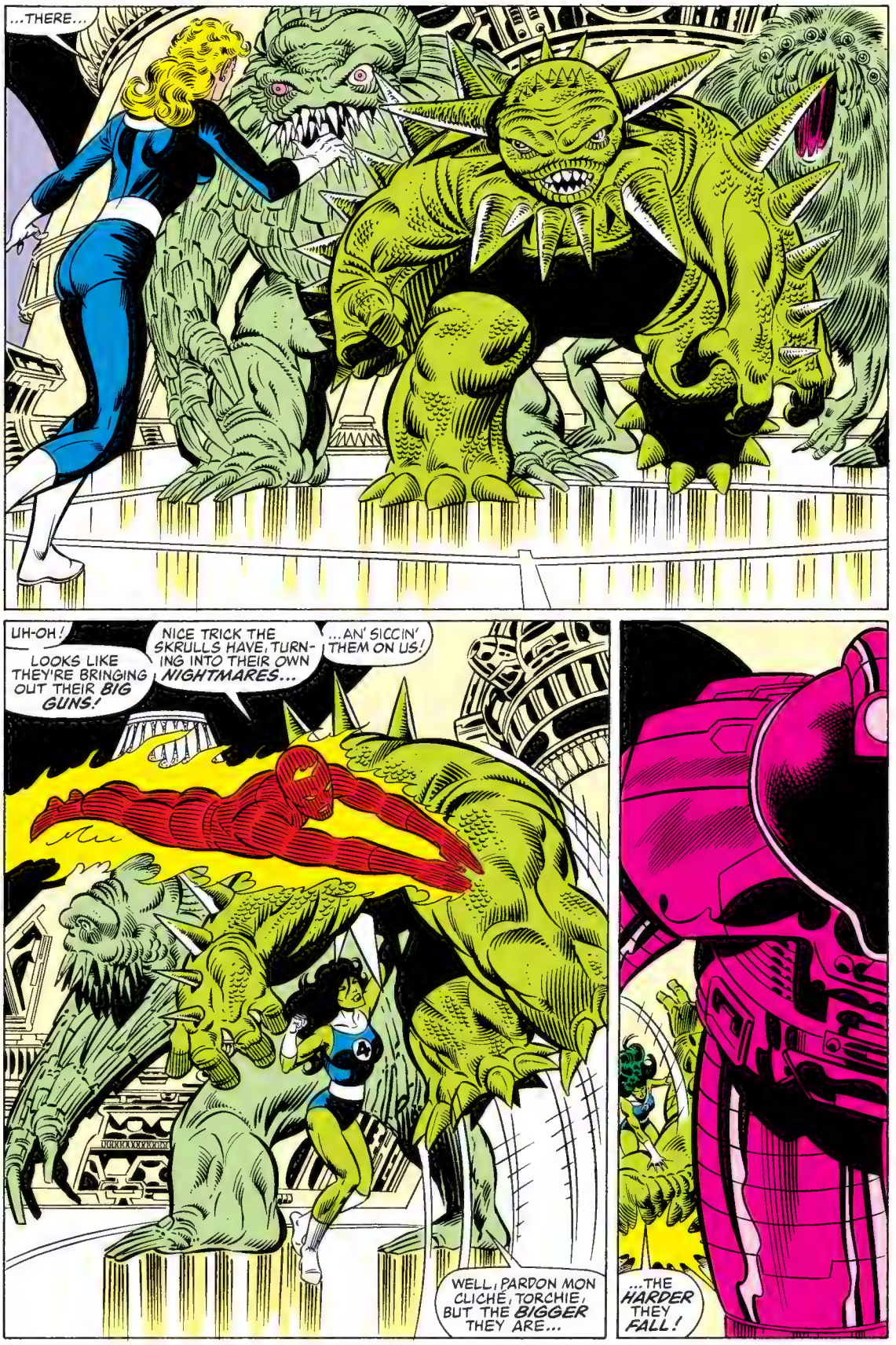
WELL? WHERE ARE THEY?
HIGHNESS, I CANNOT SAY! WE KNOW THE SHIP REACHED PLANET SOL-THREE SEVENTEEN TURNINGS AGO.
I HAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR THIS DELAY.
EXPLANATION?
STUPID, CRINGING CHURL! I DESIRE NO EXPLANATIONS...
...UNLESS YOU WISH TO EXPLAIN TO ME HOW YOUR BODY WILL CONTINUE TO FUNCTION AFTER I HAVE SEPARATED YOU FROM YOUR HEAD!
=AAAACHH=
MAJESTY! PLEASE!
SILENCE!
YOU ASSURED ME THIS SCHEME WAS FAULTLESS, THAT WITH IT I WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVE MY BORN SUPERIORITY TO ALL OTHER SKRULLS, MY DIVINE RIGHT TO RULE.
PROVING IT BY ACCOMPLISHING IN MERE HOURS WHAT THE LEGIONS OF THE OLD EMPIRE HAD FAILED TO DO, EVEN GIVEN YEARS...
...THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!
BUT NOW YOU WOULD DARE TELL ME...
WAIT... WHAT IS THIS??

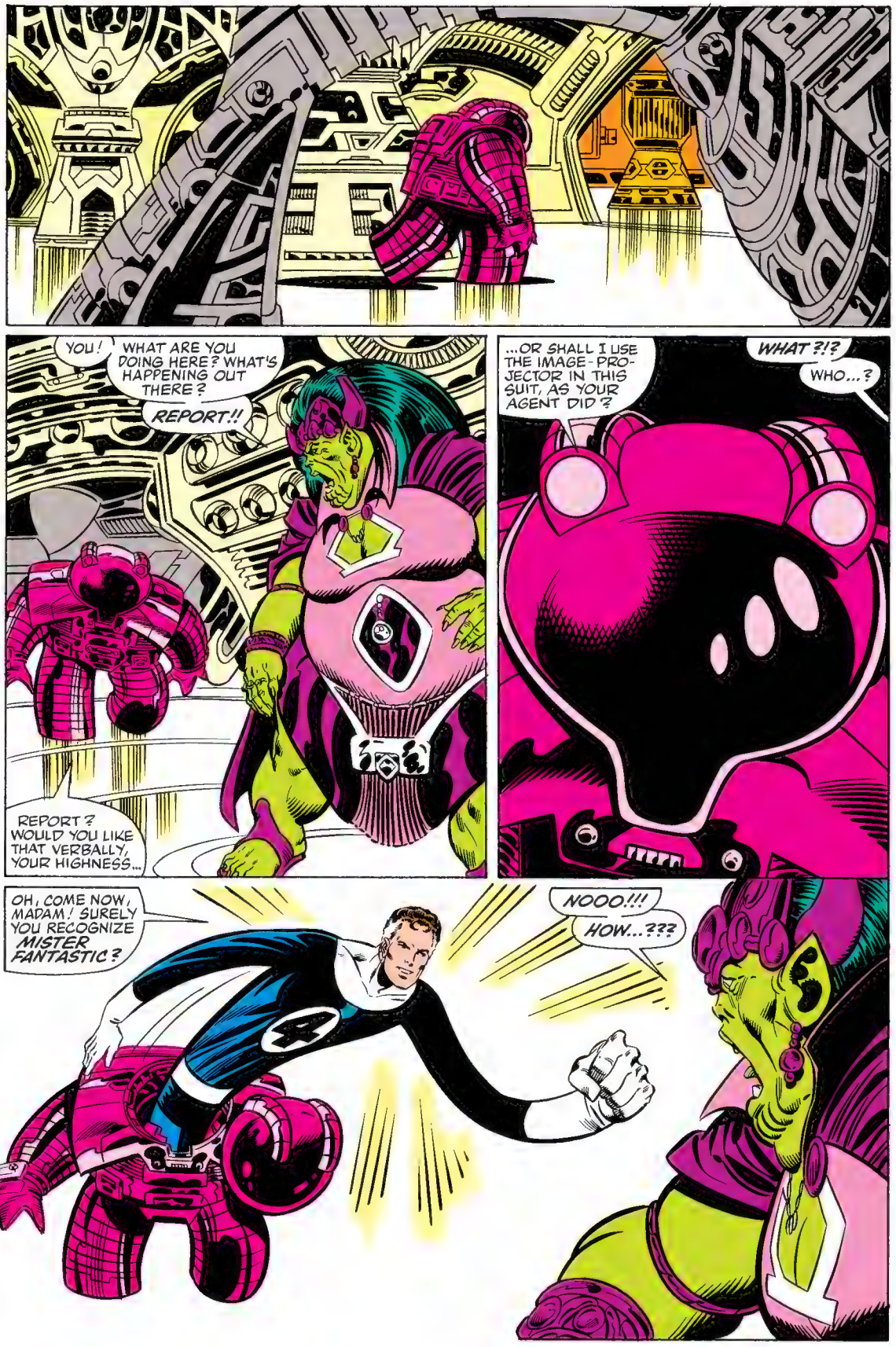
THE SPACE-ALERT BEACON! SOMETHING HAS ENTERED THE SYSTEM.
IS IT...?
YES!!
TO YOUR PLACES, EVERY-ONE!
THE FANTASTIC FOUR SHALL SOON BE WITHIN OUR GRASP!
AND WITHIN MINUTES OF THAT THEY WILL BE DEAD!
ASSUME THE FORM OF THE ELAN!
THE TRAP IS SET!
LET IT NOW BE SPRUNG!!

WOW! WHAT A PLANET! GEORGE LUCAS, EAT YOUR HEART OUT!
GREETINGS, PEOPLE OF THE ELAN! THE PEOPLE OF EARTH SALUTE YOU!
4

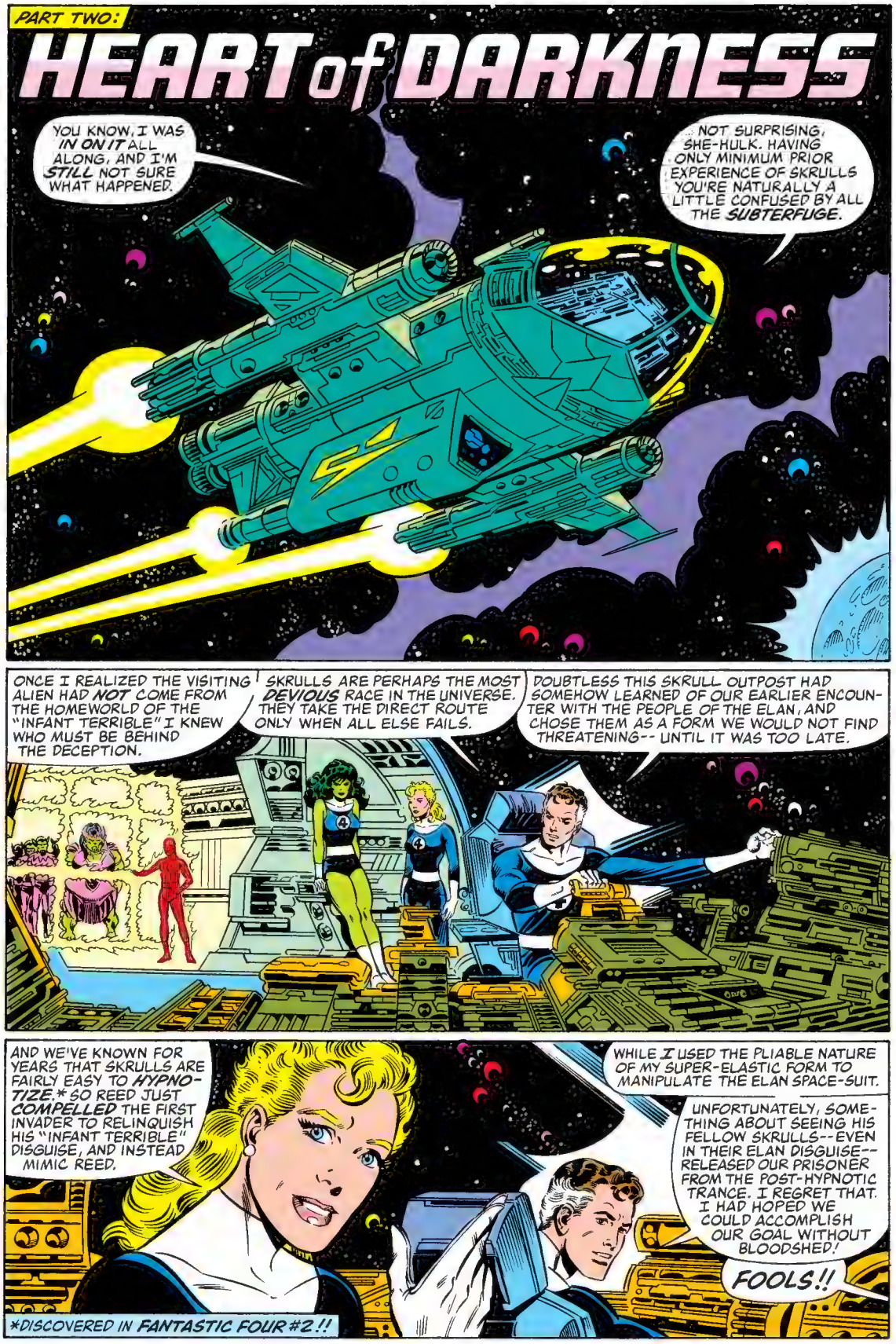
YOU WANT US TO MEET WITH YOUR LEADERS?
VERY WELL, THEN, LEAD THE WAY AND WE'LL BE HAPPY TO...
NO!
NO!
NO!
I CANNOT ALLOW IT! ATTACK THEM NOW!
DESTROY THEM!
DESTROY...
AHHGH!!
WELL, LOOKS AS IF OUR LITTLE CHARADE LASTED ALMOST AS LONG AS THEIRS DID!
HIT 'EM WHILE THEY'RE STILL WONDERIN' WHAT HAPPENED!
FLAME ON!


LOOK, THEY'RE CHANGING! THEY'RE SKRULLS TOO! JUST LIKE REED GUESSED!
AND TYPICALLY UNFRIENDLY.
C'MON, BOYS, GET REAL, CAN'T YOU?
HAVEN'T YOU FIGURED OUT YET THAT A WHOLE LEGION OF YOU BOZOS ISN'T MUCH USE AGAINST THE FANTASTIC FOUR?
STOP HER! STOP...
URK!!
THAT'S IT, KEEP DRIVING THEM BACK!
THEY OUTNUMBER US TWENTY TO ONE, BUT THE TACTICAL ADVANTAGE IS ON OUR SIDE!
TORCH--WATCH THAT ENTRANCE-WAY TO THE LEFT. THERE'S SOMETHING...

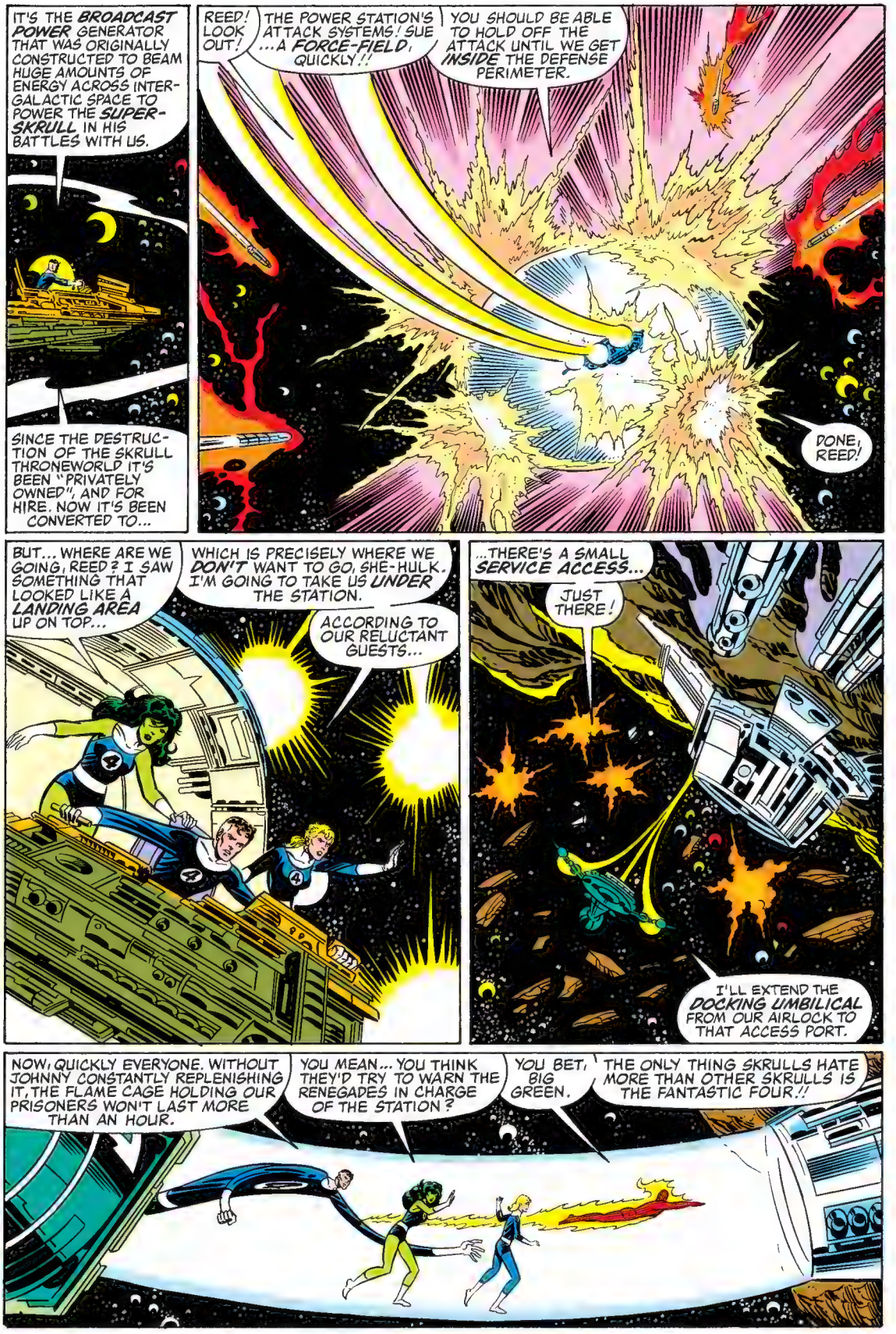

...THERE...
UH-OH!
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE BRINGING OUT THEIR BIG GUNS!
NICE TRICK THE SKRULLS HAVE, TURNING INTO THEIR OWN NIGHTMARES...
...AN' SICCIN' THEM ON US!
WELL, PARDON MON CLICHÉ, TORCHIE, BUT THE BIGGER THEY ARE...
...THE HARDER THEY FALL!

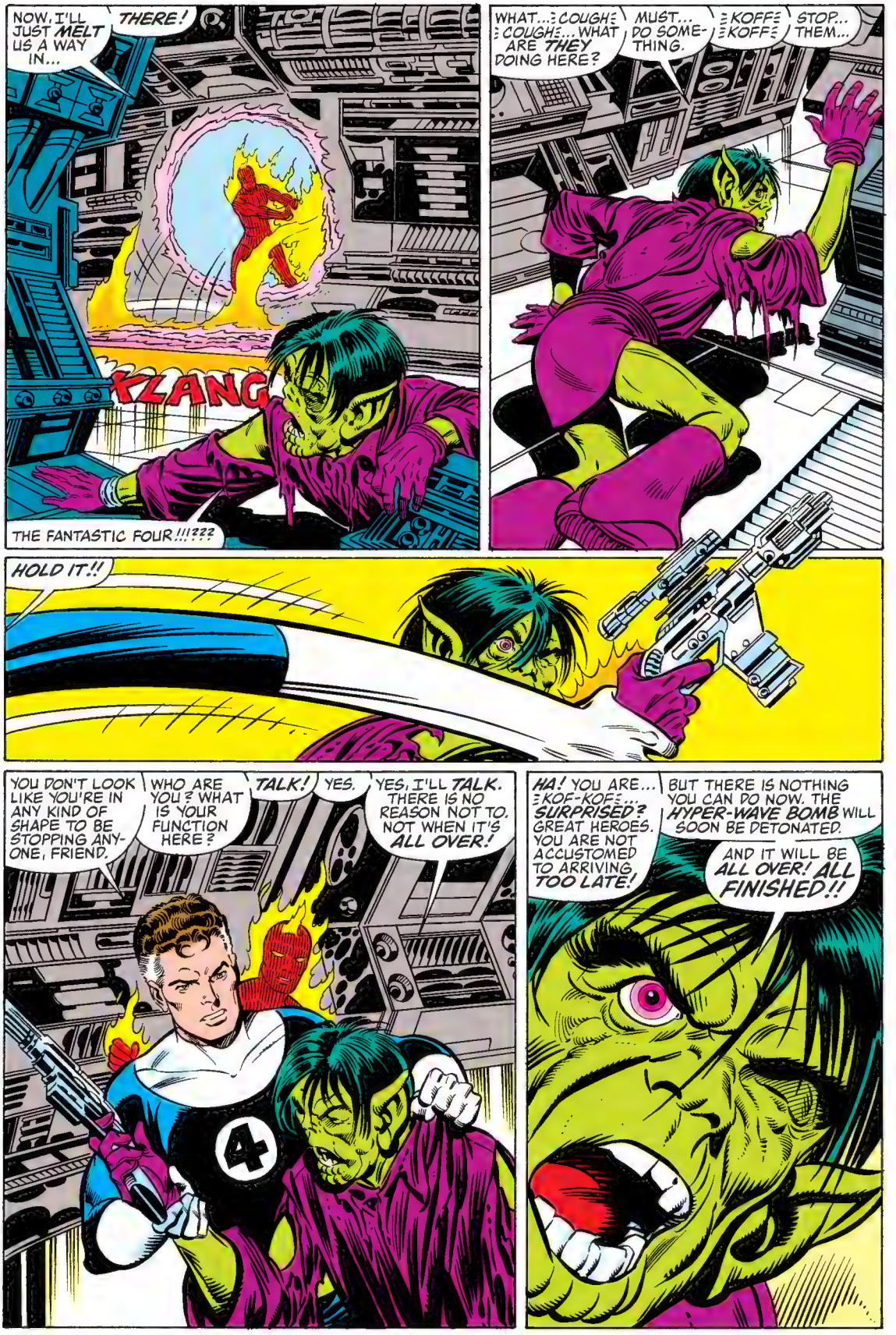

YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?
REPORT!!
REPORT? WOULD YOU LIKE THAT VERBALLY, YOUR HIGHNESS...
...OR SHALL I USE THE IMAGE-PROJECTOR IN THIS SUIT, AS YOUR AGENT DID?
WHAT?!?
WHO...?
OH, COME NOW, MADAM! SURELY YOU RECOGNIZE MISTER FANTASTIC?
NOOO!!!
HOW...???

HOW? ELEMENTARY. AS SOON AS YOUR AGENT RELATED HIS UNLIKELY ACCOUNT--WHICH WASN'T IN KEEPING WITH MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE ELAN NATURE--I BECAME SUSPICIOUS. AND CHECKED THE REPORT ON THE ALIEN ARRIVAL.
YOUR PILOT DIDN'T MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO APPEAR TO BE ENTERING FROM A BETA SCORPI TRAJECTORY.
THE FOOL! THE BENIGHTED FOOL!! TO UPSET OUR PLAN WITH SO TRIVIAL A DETAIL!
SO YOU JUST PLAYED ALONG WITH HIM UNTIL THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF TO TURN THE TABLES?
I AM SURROUNDED BY INCOMPETENTS!!!
BUT I AM NOT WITHOUT MY OWN RESOURCES, REED RICHARDS!
YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THROUGH MY SCHEME, BUT YOU STILL CAME TO THIS WORLD...
AND YOU CAN STILL DIE!!!
I DON'T THINK SO!
I DO NOT HAVE QUITE THE ARTISTRY OF A SKRULL, BUT I AM EASILY AS ADEPT AT SHAPE-CHANGING.
YOU SEE? NOW, SURRENDER, AND WE CAN DISCUSS THIS IN A CIVILIZED FASHION!
DISCUSS? DISCUSS?? THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS. I HAVE FAILED!
BY SUCCESSFULLY ANNIHILATING THE FANTASTIC FOUR I WOULD HAVE PROVEN MY WORTHINESS AS THE NEW EMPRESS.
SKRULLS EVERYWHERE WOULD HAVE FLOCKED TO MY BANNER, A VAST, UNSTOPPABLE ARMY TO SWEEP ACROSS THE COSMOS!
NOW...NOW ALL IS LOST...
AND IT SHALL NOT BE FOR ME ALONE TO PAY THE PENALTY, HUMAN!
NOW THE DEATH-KNELL IS SOUNDED FOR THE UNIVERSE ITSELF!


PART TWO:
HEART of DARKNESS
YOU KNOW, I WAS IN ON IT ALL ALONG, AND I'M STILL NOT SURE WHAT HAPPENED.
...NOT SURPRISING, SHE-HULK. HAVING ONLY MINIMUM PRIOR EXPERIENCE OF SKRULLS YOU'RE NATURALLY A LITTLE CONFUSED BY ALL THE SUBTERFUGE.
ONCE I REALIZED THE VISITING ALIEN HAD NOT COME FROM THE HOMEWORLD OF THE "INFANT TERRIBLE" I KNEW WHO MUST BE BEHIND THE DECEPTION.
SKRULLS ARE PERHAPS THE MOST DEVIOUS RACE IN THE UNIVERSE. THEY TAKE THE DIRECT ROUTE ONLY WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS.
DOUBTLESS THIS SKRULL OUTPOST HAD SOMEHOW LEARNED OF OUR EARLIER ENCOUNTER WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE ELAN, AND CHOSE THEM AS A FORM WE WOULD NOT FIND THREATENING-- UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.
AND WE'VE KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT SKRULLS ARE FAIRLY EASY TO HYPNOTIZE.* SO REED JUST COMPELLED THE FIRST INVADER TO RELINQUISH HIS "INFANT TERRIBLE" DISGUISE, AND INSTEAD MIMIC REED.
WHILE I USED THE PLIABLE NATURE OF MY SUPER-ELASTIC FORM TO MANIPULATE THE ELAN SPACE-SUIT.
UNFORTUNATELY, SOMETHING ABOUT SEEING HIS FELLOW SKRULLS--EVEN IN THEIR ELAN DISGUISE--RELEASED OUR PRISONER FROM THE POST-HYPNOTIC TRANCE. I REGRET THAT. I HAD HOPED WE COULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL WITHOUT BLOODSHED!
FOOLS!!
*DISCOVERED IN FANTASTIC FOUR #2!!

IMBECILES! MORONS! THE FATE OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE HANGS IN THE BALANCE AND YOU WORRY ABOUT A SINGLE WORTHLESS LIFE!!
HOW CAN IT BE THE SKRULL EMPIRE DID NOT CONQUER YOU YEARS AGO?
PROBABLY BECAUSE WE DO WORRY ABOUT ONE, SINGLE LIFE, QUEENIE. YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. "GOOD WILL ALWAYS TRIUMPH OVER EVIL...
"... BECAUSE IT'S NICER!"
THAT'S SOMETHING YOU SKRULLS WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND, AND I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU BECAUSE OF IT. THERE IS NO ROOM IN THE SKRULL HEART FOR THE WARMTH OF COMPASSION, FOR THE TRUE FEELINGS OF LOVE, OF CARING.
THERE IS ONLY DARKNESS.
SPARE ME YOUR SICKENING HUMAN PLATITUDES, REED RICHARDS.
YOU SAY YOU CAN PREVENT THE GREAT DESTRUCTION.
I STILL SEE NO SIGN OF YOUR PLAN.
WHEN DO YOU BEGIN??
WE'VE ALREADY BEGUN. AHEAD OF US IS THE ASTEROID POWER STATION.
OUR DESTINATION.
WOW! IT'S AS BIG AS MANHATTAN!
MAYBE BIGGER!

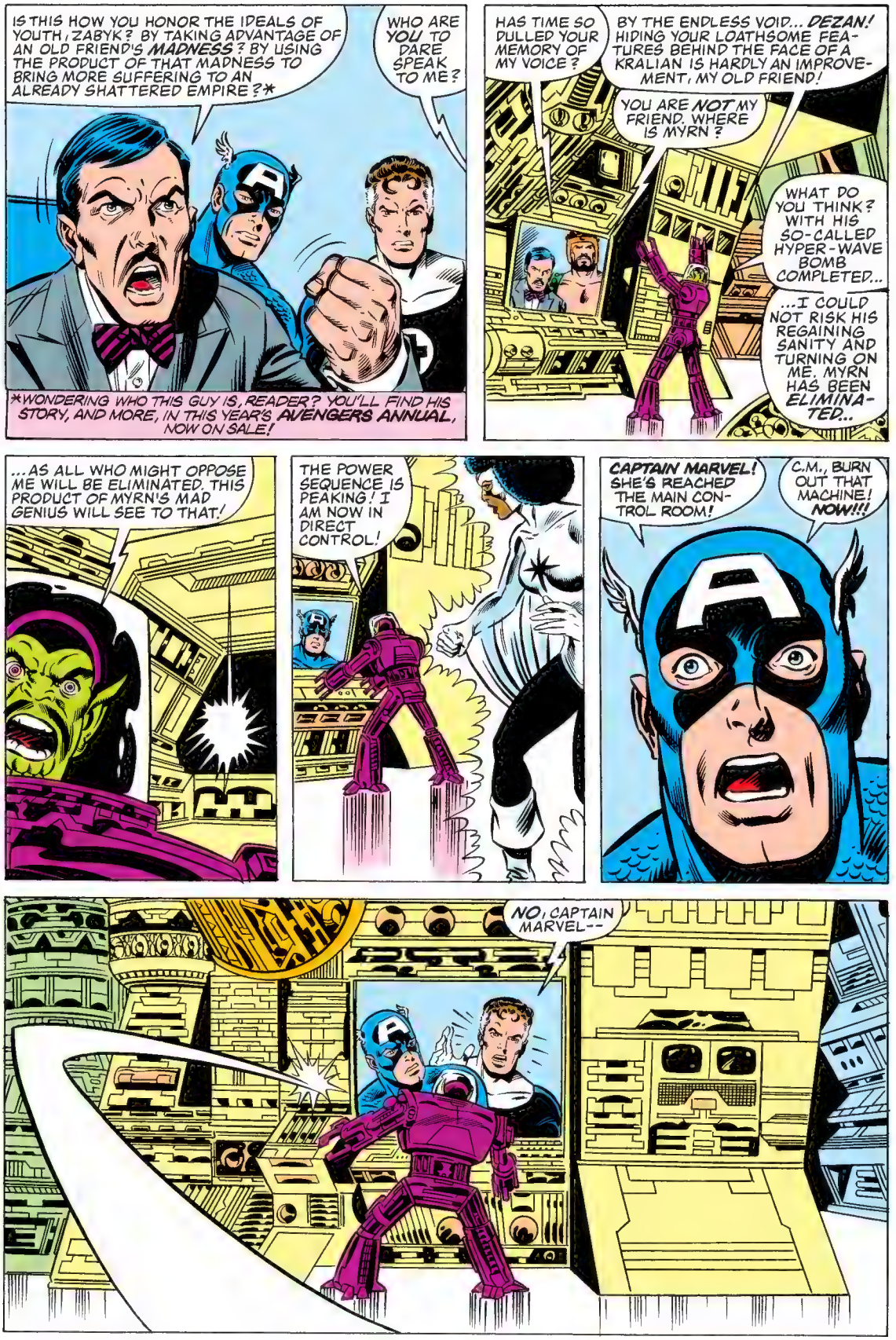

IT'S THE BROADCAST POWER GENERATOR THAT WAS ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED TO BEAM HUGE AMOUNTS OF ENERGY ACROSS INTER-GALACTIC SPACE TO POWER THE SUPER-SKRULL IN HIS BATTLES WITH US.
SINCE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SKRULL THRONEWORLD IT'S BEEN "PRIVATELY OWNED", AND FOR HIRE. NOW IT'S BEEN CONVERTED TO...
REED! LOOK OUT!
THE POWER STATION'S ATTACK SYSTEMS! SUE ...A FORCE-FIELD, QUICKLY!!
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD OFF THE ATTACK UNTIL WE GET INSIDE THE DEFENSE PERIMETER.
DONE, REED!
BUT... WHERE ARE WE GOING, REED? I SAW SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE A LANDING AREA UP ON TOP...
WHICH IS PRECISELY WHERE WE DON'T WANT TO GO, SHE-HULK. I'M GOING TO TAKE US UNDER THE STATION.
ACCORDING TO OUR RELUCTANT GUESTS...
...THERE'S A SMALL SERVICE ACCESS...
JUST THERE!
I'LL EXTEND THE DOCKING UMBILICAL FROM OUR AIRLOCK TO THAT ACCESS PORT.
NOW, QUICKLY EVERYONE. WITHOUT JOHNNY CONSTANTLY REPLENISHING IT, THE FLAME CAGE HOLDING OUR PRISONERS WON'T LAST MORE THAN AN HOUR.
YOU MEAN... YOU THINK THEY'D TRY TO WARN THE RENEGADES IN CHARGE OF THE STATION?
YOU BET, BIG GREEN.
THE ONLY THING SKRULLS HATE MORE THAN OTHER SKRULLS IS THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!

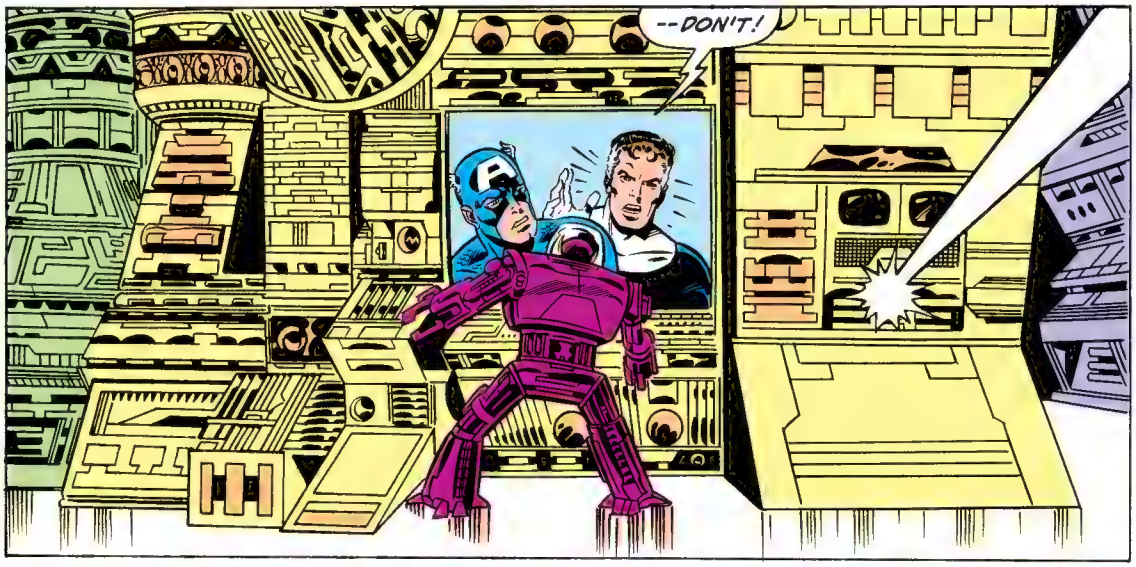

NOW, I'LL JUST MELT US A WAY IN...
THERE!
KLANG
THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!!???
WHAT...COUGH COUGH...WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?
MUST... DO SOMETHING.
KOFF KOFF
STOP... THEM...
HOLD IT!!
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN ANY KIND OF SHAPE TO BE STOPPING ANYONE, FRIEND.
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT IS YOUR FUNCTION HERE?
TALK!
YES.
YES, I'LL TALK. THERE IS NO REASON NOT TO. NOT WHEN IT'S ALL OVER!
HA! YOU ARE... KOF-KOF... SURPRISED? GREAT HEROES. YOU ARE NOT ACCUSTOMED TO ARRIVING TOO LATE!
BUT THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO NOW. THE HYPER-WAVE BOMB WILL SOON BE DETONATED.
AND IT WILL BE ALL OVER! ALL FINISHED!!

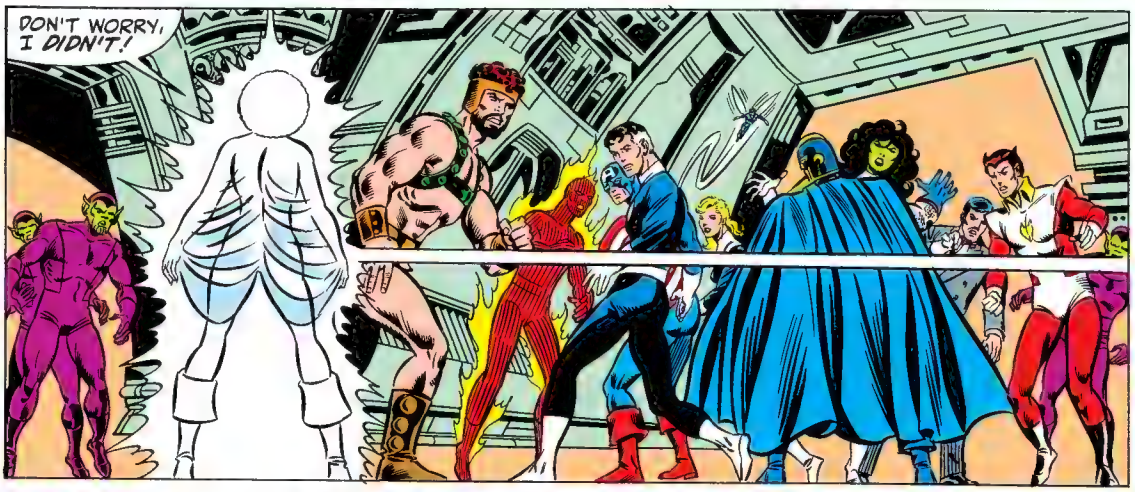
YOU SAY THAT WITH SUFFICIENT CONVICTION TO CONVINCE ME YOU KNOW THE DETAILS OF THIS INSANE SCHEME.
VERY WELL. I WANT TO KNOW THOSE DETAILS. DESCRIBE THE PRECISE FUNCTION OF THIS SO-CALLED HYPER-WAVE BOMB! NOW!
SAY, AM I JUST HEARING THINGS, OR IS THERE A BATTLE GOING ON BEHIND THIS BULKHEAD?
SURE SOUNDS LIKE IT TO ME, SIS. WE SHOULD CHECK IT OUT... BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF A DOOR. I'LL MELT US ONE...
SAVE YOUR FLAME, TORCHIE. YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY AUTOMATIC DOOR-OPENER IN THIS GROUP!
WHAT...? THE AVENGERS?!?

YOU SKRULLS NEVER LEARN, DO YOU?
SKRULLS? HEY, HOLD THE PHONE!
HOLD THIS, YOU SLIMEY--!
WHUD
WHUMP
WHOUFF!
SERVES YOU RIGHT, POTTY-MOUTH!
HERCULES, WHAT--?
I... DO NOT KNOW! 'TWOULD SEEM TO BE A BARRIER BEFORE US, BUT I SEE NAUGHT!
A FORCE-FIELD, THEN! BUT WHERE'S ITS PROJECTION SOURCE?
THAT'S A STUPID QUESTION--
--BUT I CAN'T EXPECT ANYTHING SMART FROM A BUNCH OF SKRULLS WHO'D TRY TO PASS THEMSELVES OFF AS AVENGERS!
WHAT'S WRONG, SUE?
I DON'T KNOW, REED. FOR AN ORDINARY SKRULL, THE BIG ONE IS EXERTING A LOT OF PRESSURE ON MY FIELD... BUT I CAN HOLD HIM!

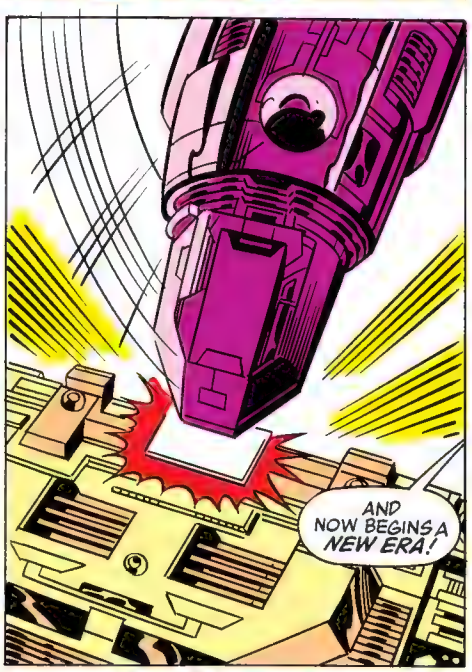
HERCULES, WAIT--THEY MAY BE THE REAL FANTASTIC FOUR!
BUT HOW CAN WE TELL?
IF YOU'RE REALLY REED RICHARDS, HOW ARE THINGS AT THE BAXTER BUILDING?
THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA KNOWS THAT THE BAXTER BUILDING WAS DESTROYED.
RIGHT... BLOWN UP IN ORBIT! YOU'VE BEEN STAYING AT AVENGERS MANSION SINCE THEN!
IT'S REALLY THEM! BOY, DO I FEEL LIKE A JERK!
I'M GLAD WE GOT THAT SETTLED, REED!
SAME HERE, CAP! THE MATTER THAT BROUGHT US HERE IS MUCH TOO URGENT TO BE INTERRUPTED BY FIGHTING OLD FRIENDS! I HAVE SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION--!
IT COMES TOO LATE, HUMAN!
I, ZABYK, SHALL SOON UNLEASH UPON AN UNSUSPECTING GALAXY THE POWER OF MY HYPERWAVE BOMB--
--THE POWER THAT WILL MAKE ME MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE!


IS THIS HOW YOU HONOR THE IDEALS OF YOUTH, ZABYK? BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF AN OLD FRIEND'S MADNESS? BY USING THE PRODUCT OF THAT MADNESS TO BRING MORE SUFFERING TO AN ALREADY SHATTERED EMPIRE?*
WHO ARE YOU TO DARE SPEAK TO ME?
*WONDERING WHO THIS GUY IS, READER? YOU'LL FIND HIS STORY, AND MORE, IN THIS YEAR'S AVENGERS ANNUAL, NOW ON SALE!
HAS TIME SO DULLED YOUR MEMORY OF MY VOICE?
BY THE ENDLESS VOID... DEZAN! HIDING YOUR LOATHSOME FEATURES BEHIND THE FACE OF A KRALIAN IS HARDLY AN IMPROVEMENT, MY OLD FRIEND!
YOU ARE NOT MY FRIEND. WHERE IS MYRN?
WHAT DO YOU THINK? WITH HIS SO-CALLED HYPER-WAVE BOMB COMPLETED...
...I COULD NOT RISK HIS REGAINING SANITY AND TURNING ON ME. MYRN HAS BEEN ELIMINATED...
...AS ALL WHO MIGHT OPPOSE ME WILL BE ELIMINATED. THIS PRODUCT OF MYRN'S MAD GENIUS WILL SEE TO THAT!
THE POWER SEQUENCE IS PEAKING! I AM NOW IN DIRECT CONTROL!
CAPTAIN MARVEL! SHE'S REACHED THE MAIN CONTROL ROOM!
C.M., BURN OUT THAT MACHINE! NOW!!!
NO, CAPTAIN MARVEL--


--DON'T!


DON'T WORRY, I DIDN'T!

IF ALL THAT SHOUTING WAS SUPPOSED TO DISTRACT ME EARTHERS, IT WAS A PATHETICALLY FEEBLE PLOY!
I TOLD YOU I COULDN'T BE STOPPED!


AND NOW BEGINS A NEW ERA!

WHAT... WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US?
IT'S NOT AFFECTING US! ONLY...
...THE SKRULLS!!
NO... NO, IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! I AM SHIELDED! IT CAN'T WORK ON ME...
...NOT MEEEE=
CHA-VOOM
WELL, SCRATCH THAT SCREEN!
PRINCE DEZAN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M... NOT CERTAIN. I THINK SO.
I FULLY EXPECTED TO DIE, AND I DECIDED TO MEET DEATH WEARING MY TRUE-FACE...
...REPULSIVE AS IT MAY BE BY SKRULL STANDARDS, IT IS STILL MINE!
BUT THE CHANGE WAS MOST PAINFUL... THE EFFECT OF THE BOMBARDMENT FELT MUCH LIKE THAT OF THE INHIBITOR MASK.

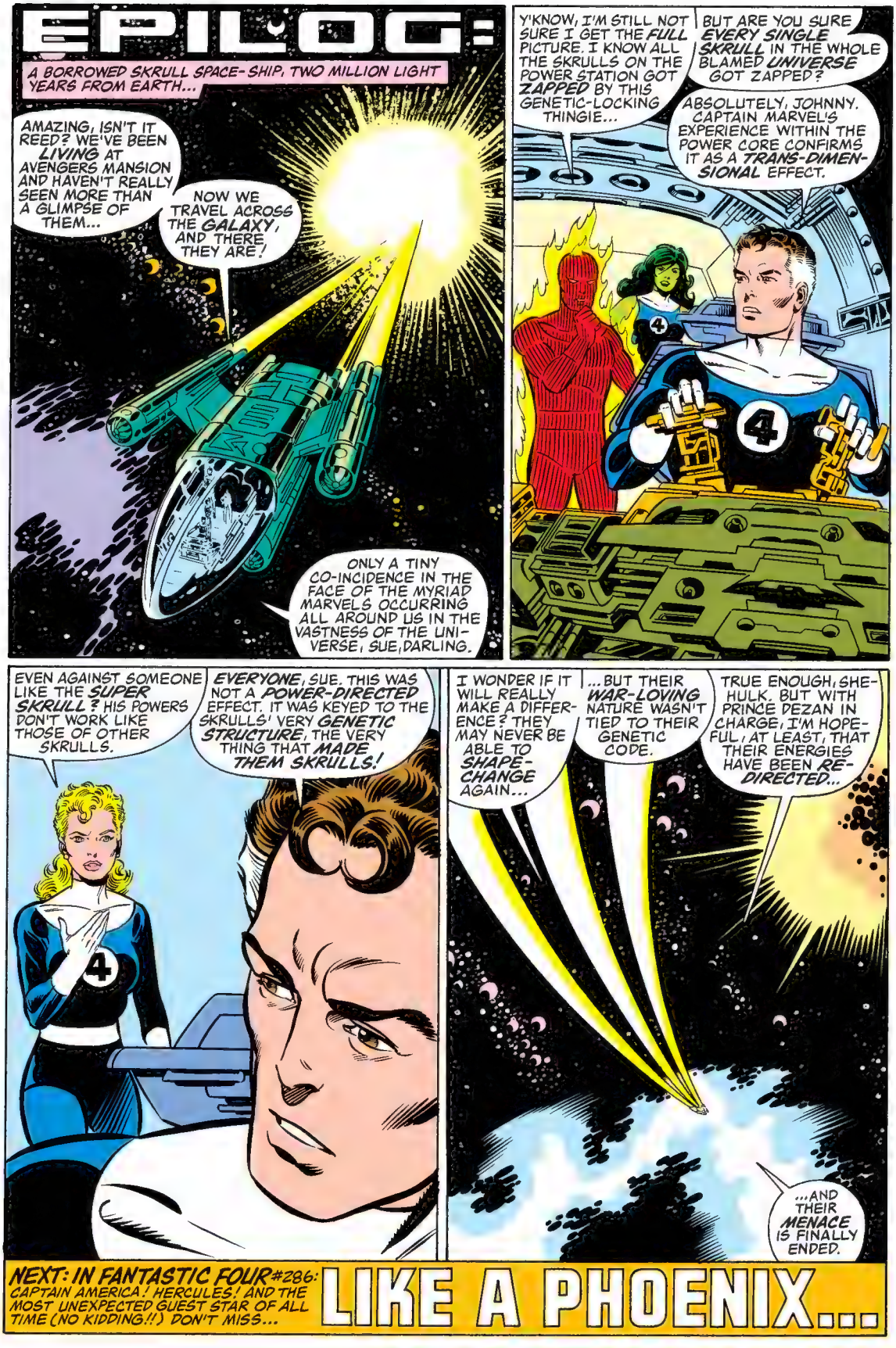
I'M SORRY... I WISH I COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING. BUT THE ENERGY IN THE POWER CORE HAD ALREADY BUILT TO SUCH A STATE THAT I DIDN'T DARE STOP THE HYPERWAVE GENERATOR.
IF I HAD, THE DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE WOULD HAVE RIPPED APART!
THANK HEAVENS YOU REALIZED THAT, CAPTAIN MARVEL!
SUCH A BREECH WOULD'VE CAUSED OUR ENTIRE UNIVERSE TO COLLAPSE INTO ANOTHER...

...DESTROYING BOTH!
I'M NOT CERTAIN WHAT'S JUST HAPPENED, BUT I DO KNOW WHO'S TO BLAME! C.M., WHERE CAN WE FIND ZABYK?

REED SAYS THE RADIATION LEVELS ARE DOWN TO NORMAL, HERC. LET'S MAKE A NEW DOOR!
WHY THIS FLIMSY BARRIER IS LESS THAN A FOOT THICK! 'TWILL TAKE BUT A FRACTION OF MY MIGHT!
HELP ME... HELP ME...

I HAD TO CHANGE SHAPE TO INFUSE WITH THIS ARMOR. NOW I CAN'T GET OUT!!!

YOU KILLED THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HELP YOU--
--THOUGH I DID NOT REALIZE IT AT THE TIME! I FOUND MYRN DYING AND LEARNED THE PURPOSE OF HIS "BOMB"... TO STABILIZE THE DEVIANT GENETIC CODE OF ALL SKRULLS...
...EVERYWHERE!
NO-NO-NO-NO... I WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE AFFECTED. THE ARMOR WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT ME.
SO, POOR MAD MYRN ACCOMPLISHED WHAT WE NEVER COULD--HE HAS PERMANENTLY CHANGED SKRULL SOCIETY! BEFORE, IF THE TRUE-FACES OF OUR BIRTHLINGS WERE UNAPPEALING, WE COULD CHANGE THEM...
...OR BE COERCED INTO CHANGING THEM. OUR FACES, OUR FORMS COULD BE CHANGED AT WILL. NOW, THAT CHOICE IS GONE. ALL SKRULLS ARE TRAPPED FOREVER IN THE FORM THEY WERE IN WHEN THE BOMB WENT OFF WHAT CHAOS WILL BEFALL US... NOW THAT WE WILL ALL BE SO DIFFERENT?
BEING DIFFERENT IS NOT A WEAKNESS, PRINCE.
MY PEOPLE HAVE AN IDEAL... A BELIEF IN EQUALITY OF THE MIND, OF THE SOUL... EQUALITY, NOT SAMENESS. OUR NATION HAS EMBRACED ALL DIFFERENT SIZES, SHAPES, AND COLORS OF PEOPLE--
--AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I THINK, WE'VE GROWN STRONGER IN OUR PURSUIT OF LIBERTY AND OF PEACE!
PEACE AND LIBERTY, EH? THOSE ARE LOFTY GOALS. I WOULD HOPE THAT MY RACE COULD ONE DAY ACHIEVE SUCH GOALS.
PERHAPS, THERE IS YET HOPE.


EPILOG:
A BORROWED SKRULL SPACE-SHIP, TWO MILLION LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH...
AMAZING, ISN'T IT REED? WE'VE BEEN LIVING AT AVENGERS MANSION AND HAVEN'T REALLY SEEN MORE THAN A GLIMPSE OF THEM...
NOW WE TRAVEL ACROSS THE GALAXY, AND THERE, THEY ARE!
ONLY A TINY CO-INCIDENCE IN THE FACE OF THE MYRIAD MARVELS OCCURRING ALL AROUND US IN THE VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE, SUE, DARLING.
Y'KNOW, I'M STILL NOT SURE I GET THE FULL PICTURE. I KNOW ALL THE SKRULLS ON THE POWER STATION GOT ZAPPED BY THIS GENETIC-LOCKING THINGIE...
BUT ARE YOU SURE EVERY SINGLE SKRULL IN THE WHOLE BLAMED UNIVERSE GOT ZAPPED?
ABSOLUTELY, JOHNNY. CAPTAIN MARVEL'S EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE POWER CORE CONFIRMS IT AS A TRANS-DIMENSIONAL EFFECT.
EVEN AGAINST SOMEONE LIKE THE SUPER SKRULL? HIS POWERS DON'T WORK LIKE THOSE OF OTHER SKRULLS.
EVERYONE, SUE. THIS WAS NOT A POWER-DIRECTED EFFECT. IT WAS KEYED TO THE SKRULLS' VERY GENETIC STRUCTURE, THE VERY THING THAT MADE THEM SKRULLS!
I WONDER IF IT WILL REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE? THEY MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO SHAPE-CHANGE AGAIN...
...BUT THEIR WAR-LOVING NATURE WASN'T TIED TO THEIR GENETIC CODE.
TRUE ENOUGH, SHE-HULK. BUT WITH PRINCE DEZAN IN CHARGE, I'M HOPEFUL, AT LEAST, THAT THEIR ENERGIES HAVE BEEN RE-DIRECTED...
...AND THEIR MENACE IS FINALLY ENDED.
NEXT: IN FANTASTIC FOUR #286: CAPTAIN AMERICA! HERCULES! AND THE MOST UNEXPECTED GUEST STAR OF ALL TIME (NO KIDDING!!) DON'T MISS...
LIKE A PHOENIX...

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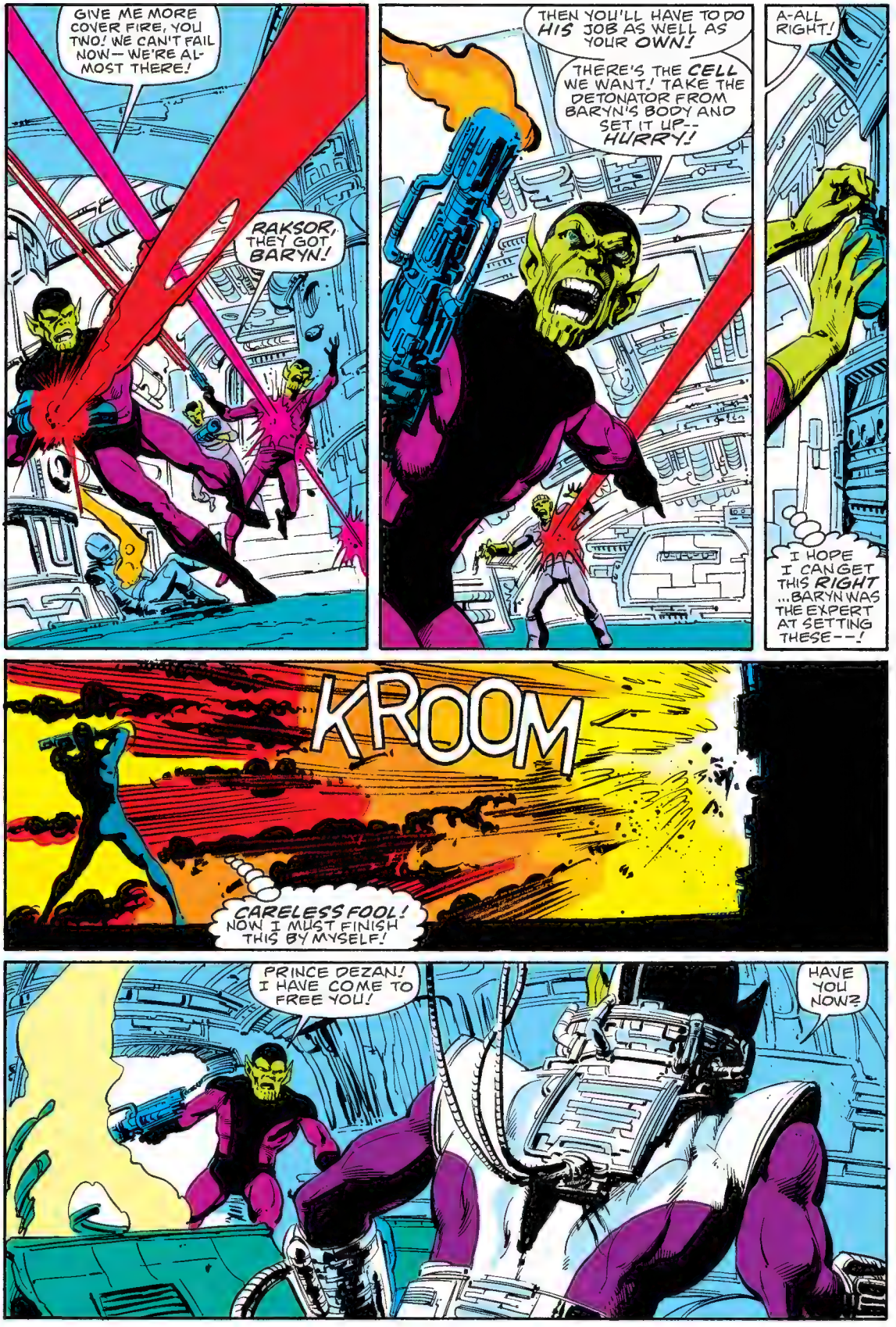
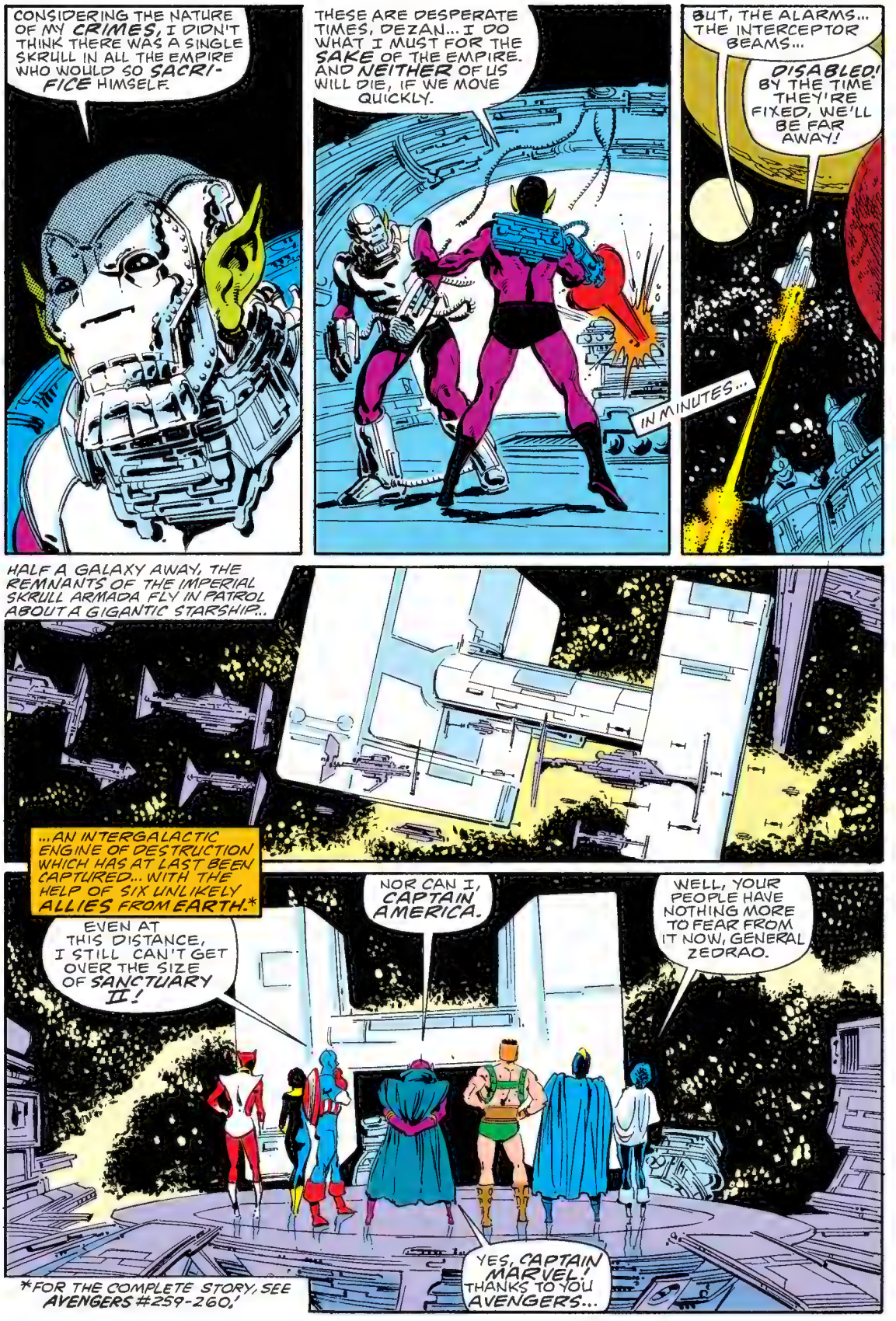
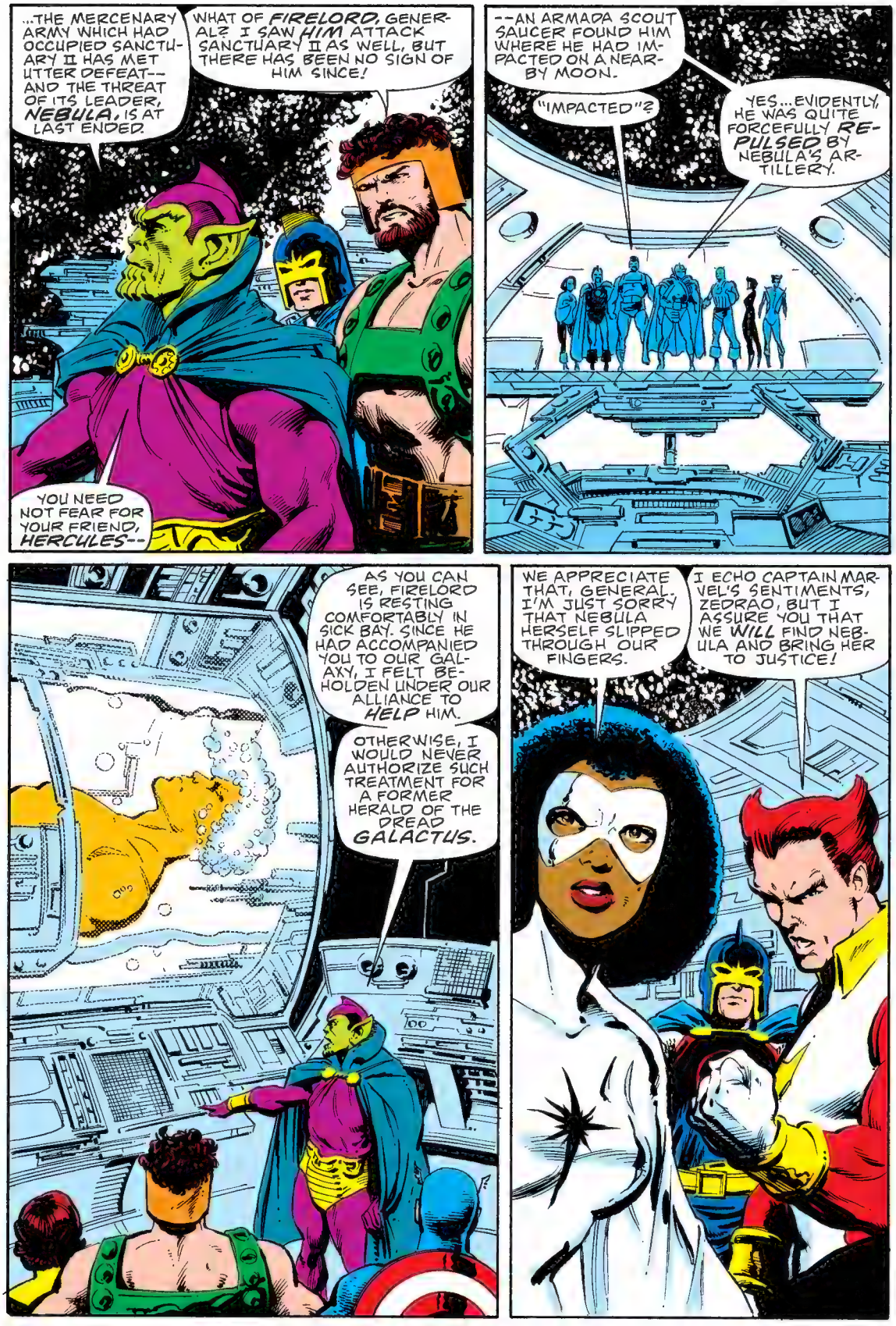
STAN LEE PRESENTS
FIFTH COLUMN
MILLIONS OF LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH, IN A REMOTE SECTOR OF THE ANDROMEDA GALAXY, LIES THE PLANET KLARR.
HERE, FOR THE LAST 10,000 YEARS, THE SKRULL EMPIRE HAS IMPRISONED ITS GREATEST CRIMINALS.
IN ALL THAT TIME, NO PRISONER HAS EVER ESCAPED--AND NO SKRULL HAS WILLINGLY SET FOOT UPON THIS VILE AND FETID WORLD... UNTIL NOW!
FOLLOW ME, AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT! TONIGHT WE MAKE HISTORY!
ROGER STERN WRITER
JOHN WORKMAN LETTERER
JOHN BYRNE BREAKDOWNS
CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORIST
KYLE BAKER FINISHES
MARK GRUENWALD EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

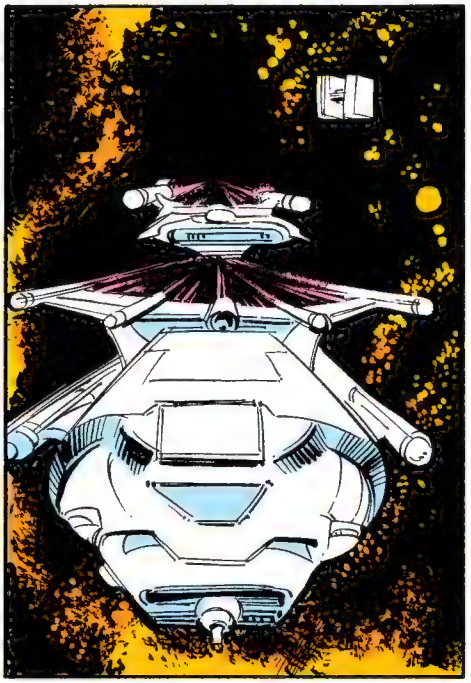

GIVE ME MORE COVER FIRE, YOU TWO! WE CAN'T FAIL NOW— WE'RE ALMOST THERE!
RAKSOR, THEY GOT BARYN!
THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO DO HIS JOB AS WELL AS YOUR OWN!
THERE'S THE CELL WE WANT! TAKE THE DETONATOR FROM BARYN'S BODY AND SET IT UP-- HURRY!
A-ALL RIGHT!
I HOPE I CAN GET THIS RIGHT ...BARYN WAS THE EXPERT AT SETTING THESE--!
KROOM
CARELESS FOOL! NOW I MUST FINISH THIS BY MYSELF!
PRINCE DEZAN! I HAVE COME TO FREE YOU!
HAVE YOU NOW?


CONSIDERING THE NATURE OF MY CRIMES, I DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS A SINGLE SKRULL IN ALL THE EMPIRE WHO WOULD SO SACRIFICE HIMSELF.
THESE ARE DESPERATE TIMES, DEZAN... I DO WHAT I MUST FOR THE SAKE OF THE EMPIRE. AND NEITHER OF US WILL DIE, IF WE MOVE QUICKLY.
BUT, THE ALARMS... THE INTERCEPTOR BEAMS...
DISABLED! BY THE TIME THEY'RE FIXED, WE'LL BE FAR AWAY!
IN MINUTES...
HALF A GALAXY AWAY, THE REMNANTS OF THE IMPERIAL SKRULL ARMADA FLY IN PATROL ABOUT A GIGANTIC STARSHIP...
...AN INTERGALACTIC ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION WHICH HAS AT LAST BEEN CAPTURED... WITH THE HELP OF SIX UNLIKELY ALLIES FROM EARTH.*
EVEN AT THIS DISTANCE, I STILL CAN'T GET OVER THE SIZE OF SANCTUARY II!
NOR CAN I, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
WELL, YOUR PEOPLE HAVE NOTHING MORE TO FEAR FROM IT NOW, GENERAL ZEDRAO.
YES, CAPTAIN MARVEL! THANKS TO YOU AVENGERS...
*FOR THE COMPLETE STORY, SEE AVENGERS #259-260.

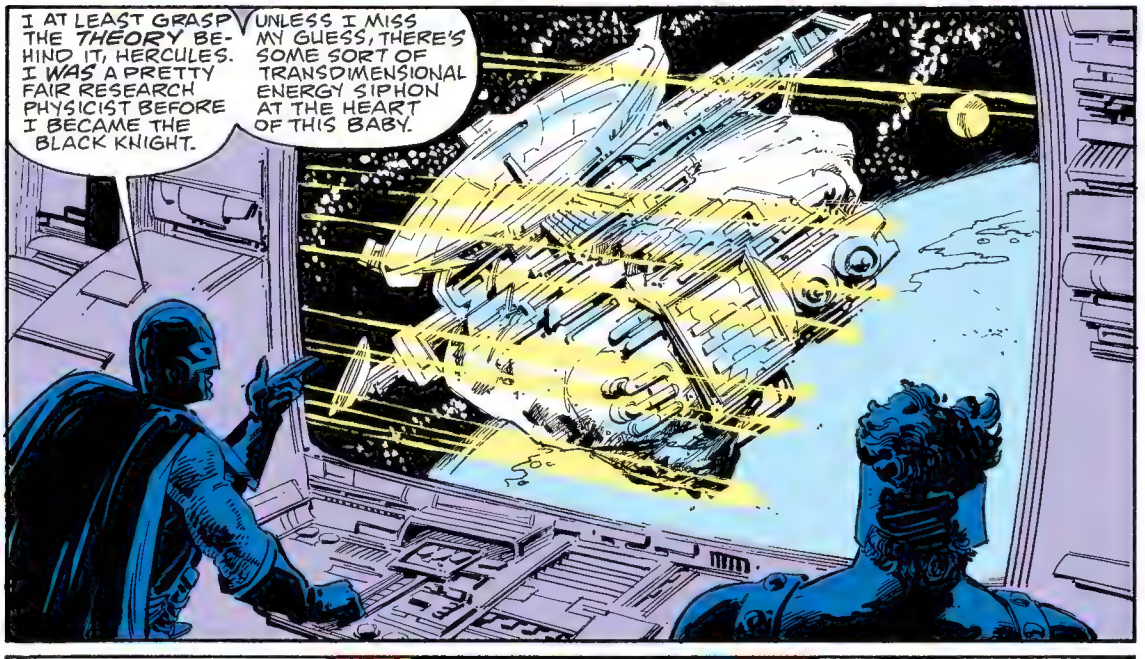

...THE MERCENARY ARMY WHICH HAD OCCUPIED SANCTUARY II HAS MET UTTER DEFEAT--AND THE THREAT OF ITS LEADER, NEBULA, IS AT LAST ENDED.
WHAT OF FIRELORD, GENERAL? I SAW HIM ATTACK SANCTUARY II AS WELL, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGN OF HIM SINCE!
YOU NEED NOT FEAR FOR YOUR FRIEND, HERCULES--
--AN ARMADA SCOUT SAUCER FOUND HIM WHERE HE HAD IMPACTED ON A NEARBY MOON.
"IMPACTED"?
YES...EVIDENTLY, HE WAS QUITE FORCEFULLY REPULSED BY NEBULA'S ARTILLERY.
AS YOU CAN SEE, FIRELORD IS RESTING COMFORTABLY IN SICK BAY. SINCE HE HAD ACCOMPANIED YOU TO OUR GALAXY, I FELT BEHOLDEN UNDER OUR ALLIANCE TO HELP HIM.
OTHERWISE, I WOULD NEVER AUTHORIZE SUCH TREATMENT FOR A FORMER HERALD OF THE DREAD GALACTUS.
WE APPRECIATE THAT, GENERAL. I'M JUST SORRY THAT NEBULA HERSELF SLIPPED THROUGH OUR FINGERS.
I ECHO CAPTAIN MARVEL'S SENTIMENTS, ZEDRAO, BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT WE WILL FIND NEBULA AND BRING HER TO JUSTICE!

STAR-FOX! DON'T MAKE PROMISES WE CAN'T KEEP!
THE WASP IS RIGHT, 'FOX. WE'RE ALL UPSET ABOUT NEBULA GETTING TELEPORTED AWAY BY SOME COSMIC WEIRDO,* BUT WE CAN'T SEARCH THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE FOR HER.
THERE MUST BE SOME WAY WE CAN TRACK HER DOWN, DANE.
THERE MIGHT BE AT THAT!
A SENSOR GRID OF INTERGALACTIC RANGE WAS HOUSED ON THE OLD IMPERIAL POWER ASTEROID. PERHAPS IT COULD BE USED TO HOME IN ON THE WILD ENERGIES USED TO TRANSPORT NEBULA AND HER AIDES!
*SEE AVENGERS #260, STILL ON SALE.
IF THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS, WE MUST CHECK IT OUT!
I COULD PROVIDE YOU SAFE PASSAGE TO THE ASTEROID.
YOU'RE IN CHARGE, JAN. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WELL... I GUESS IT'S WORTH A TRY.
AFTER ALL, IF WE'VE COME THIS FAR--!

MERE MINUTES LATER, A SKRULL ESCORT SAUCER HURRIES TO CATCH UP, AS STARFOX'S TITANIAN STARSHIP STREAKS AWAY FROM THE CLUSTERED ARMADA...



WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO STARFOX? IN ALL THE TIME I'VE KNOWN HIM, HE'S NEVER ACTED SO INTENSE.
THE DATA GENERAL ZEDRAO SUPPLIED US ON THIS POWER ASTEROID IS FASCINATING!
YOU UNDERSTAND THIS GIBBERISH, DANE WHITMAN?

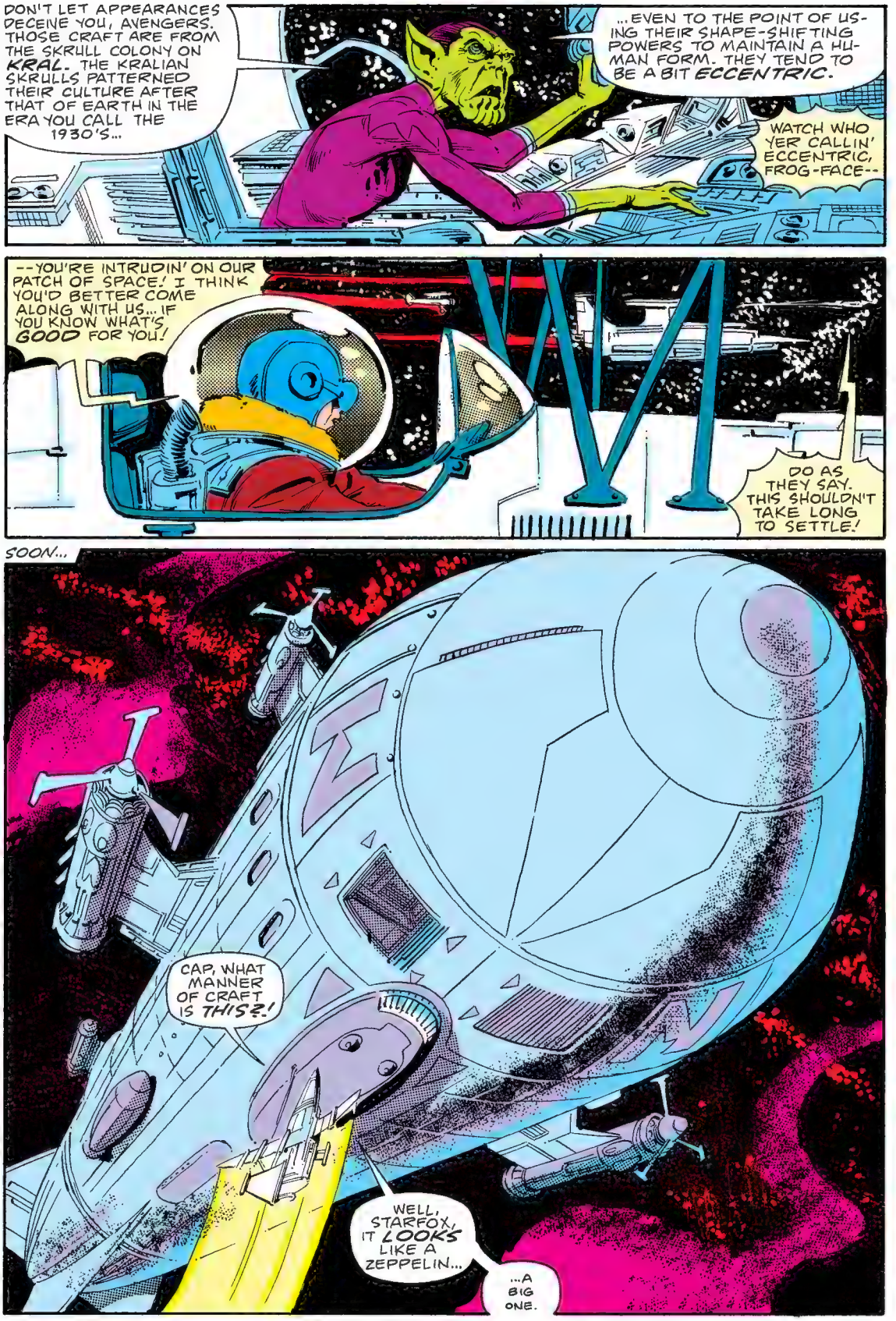

I AT LEAST GRASP THE THEORY BEHIND IT, HERCULES. I WAS A PRETTY FAIR RESEARCH PHYSICIST BEFORE I BECAME THE BLACK KNIGHT.
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, THERE'S SOME SORT OF TRANSDIMENSIONAL ENERGY SIPHON AT THE HEART OF THIS BABY.

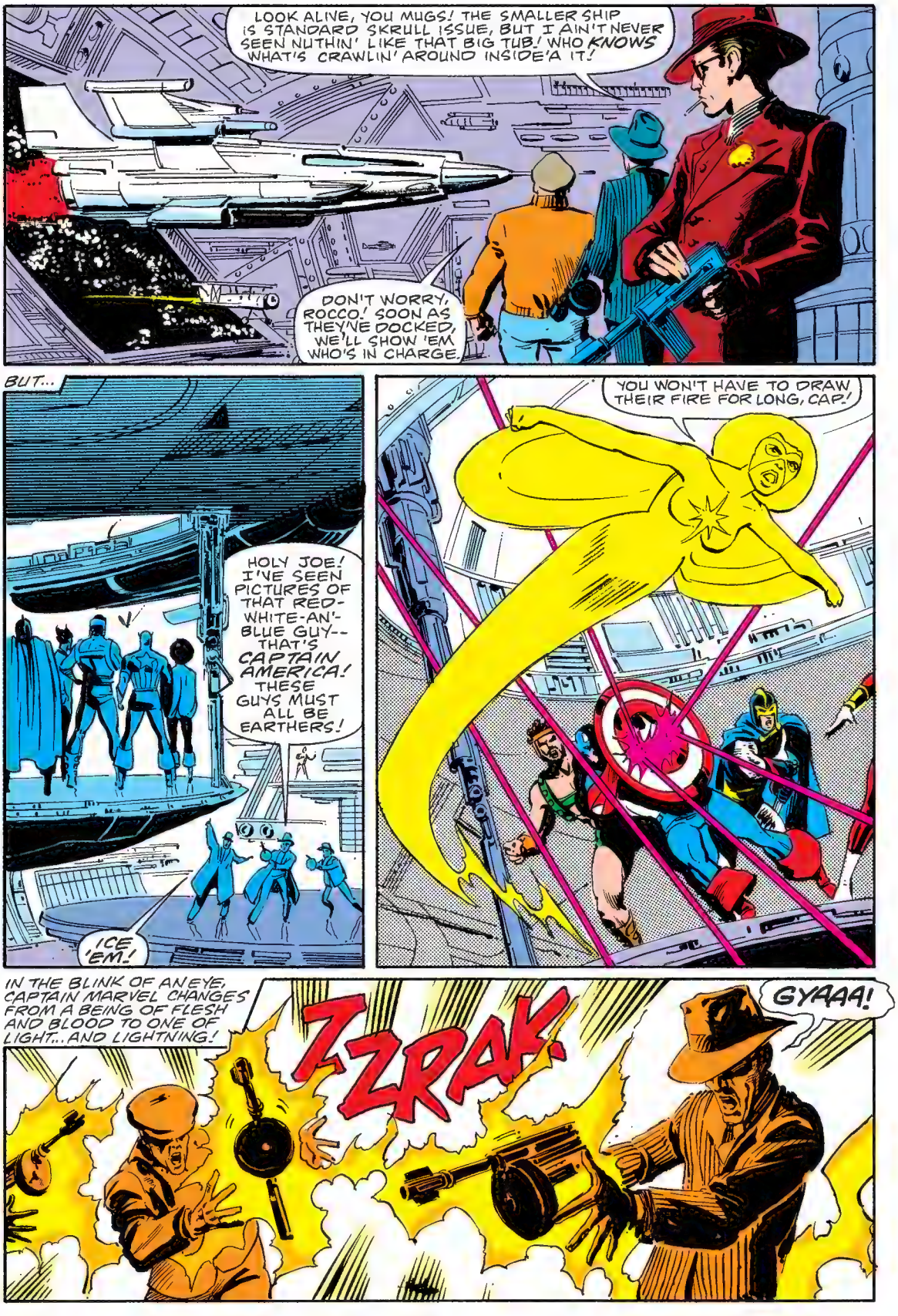
IT'S SOMETIMES BEEN USED AS A CHARGING STATION FOR HIGH-ENERGY CAPACITOR CRYSTALS THAT THE SKRULLS CALL POWER STONES-- BUT PRIMARILY, IT BROADCASTS POWER... THOUGH TO WHERE, I CAN'T TELL.
PERHAPS IT SUPPLIED POWER FOR THE SKRULL THRONEWORLD. IT USED TO ORBIT THRONEWORLD... BEFORE THAT PLANET WAS CONSUMED BY GALACTUS!*

*IN FANTASTIC FOUR #257.

WE ARE CERTAIN THAT THIS POWER ASTEROID SURVIVED GALACTUS'S ATTACK, AREN'T WE?
ACCORDING TO THE ARMADA'S BEST INTELLIGENCE, IT DID. LET'S HOPE THEY'RE RIGHT.
ACROSS THE CABIN...
HAD I ACTED MORE SWIFTLY, NEBULA MIGHT NOT HAVE ESCAPED JUSTICE. IF ONLY I HADN'T PLAYED THE OVERCONFIDENT FOOL AND CONFRONTED HER ALONE--!
I WAS TOTALLY THROWN OFF GUARD WHEN SHE CLAIMED THAT MY BROTHER THANOS WAS HER GRANDFATHER. SHE COULD HAVE BEEN LYING...
...BUT WHETHER OR NOT THANOS'S MADNESS LIVES ON IN THAT BLOODTHIRSTY WITCH, IT IS STILL MY SACRED DUTY TO STOP HER!
EH? WHAT'S THIS?
AVENGERS TO ESCORT...YOU'RE STARTING TO PULL AWAY! EXPLAIN!
@#%$@M EARTHERS! IF I WEREN'T UNDER ORDERS, I'D LEAD YOU INTO A BLACK HOLE! YOU MIGHT'VE HELPED THE ARMADA TODAY, BUT I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN HOW YOUR KIND COST US A DECISIVE VICTORY OVER THE KREE!*
JUST GETTING INTO PROPER FORMATION FOR THE JUMP THROUGH SUB-SPACE!
ACKNOWLEDGED! AM INITIATING HYPERDRIVE PROCEDURES...
*WAY BACK IN AVENGERS #96-97.
...READY TO WARP ON YOUR SIGNAL.
NOW!

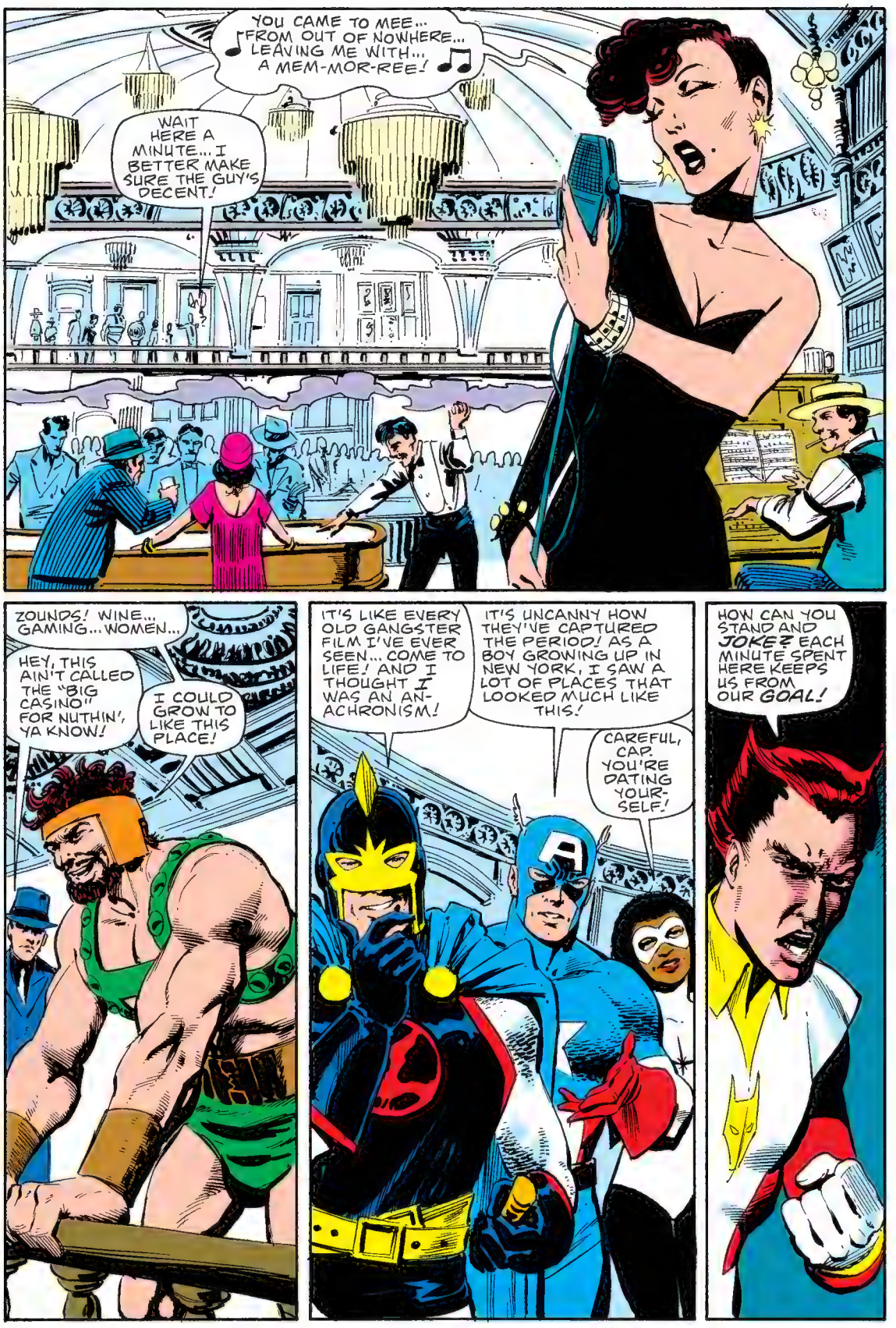
FOR A MOMENT, TIME AND SPACE LOSE ALL MEANING AS THE TWO SHIPS WARP THROUGH THE NON-UNIVERSE OF SUB-SPACE!
THEN--QUITE SUDDENLY--THEY SNAP BACK TO REALITY, HAVING JUMPED HUNDREDS OF LIGHT YEARS IN A FRACTION OF A HEARTBEAT!
AND, JUST AS SUDDENLY...
AVENGERS TO ESCORT... I'M READING TWO UNKNOWNS CLOSING ON US FAST!
SAME HERE! WE SHOULD BE GETTING A VISUAL ON THEM--
--ANY SECOND!
I MUST BE SEEING THINGS!
I SEE THEM, TOO, DANE.
YON CRAFT ARE PASSING STRANGE, BUT--!
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW STRANGE, HERCULES...
...THOSE ARE WORLD WAR I BIPLANES!!
WHAT AM I SAYING? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!


DON'T LET APPEARANCES DECEIVE YOU, AVENGERS. THOSE CRAFT ARE FROM THE SKRULL COLONY ON KRAL. THE KRALIAN SKRULLS PATTERNED THEIR CULTURE AFTER THAT OF EARTH IN THE ERA YOU CALL THE 1930'S...
...EVEN TO THE POINT OF USING THEIR SHAPE-SHIFTING POWERS TO MAINTAIN A HUMAN FORM. THEY TEND TO BE A BIT ECCENTRIC.
WATCH WHO YER CALLIN' ECCENTRIC, FROG-FACE--
--YOU'RE INTRUDIN' ON OUR PATCH OF SPACE! I THINK YOU'D BETTER COME ALONG WITH US... IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!
DO AS THEY SAY. THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG TO SETTLE!
SOON...
CAP, WHAT MANNER OF CRAFT IS THIS?!
WELL, STARFOX, IT LOOKS LIKE A ZEPPELIN...
...A BIG ONE.

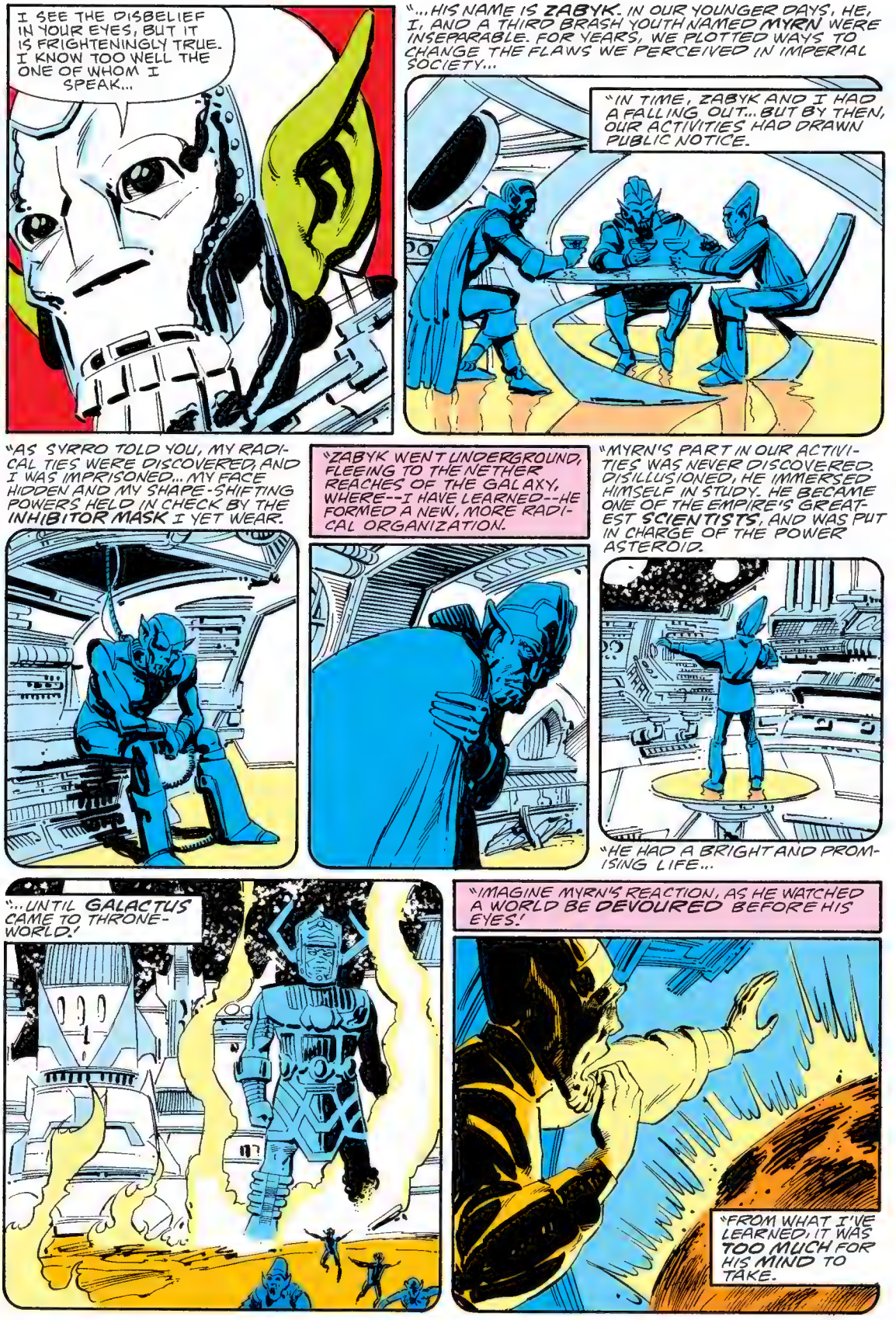

LOOK ALIVE, YOU MUGS! THE SMALLER SHIP IS STANDARD SKRULL ISSUE, BUT I AIN'T NEVER SEEN NUTHIN' LIKE THAT BIG TUB! WHO KNOWS WHAT'S CRAWLIN' AROUND INSIDE'A IT!
DON'T WORRY, ROCCO! SOON AS THEY'VE DOCKED, WE'LL SHOW 'EM WHO'S IN CHARGE.
BUT...
HOLY JOE! I'VE SEEN PICTURES OF THAT RED-WHITE-AN'-BLUE GUY--THAT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA! THESE GUYS MUST ALL BE EARTHERS!
ICE 'EM!
YOU WON'T HAVE TO DRAW THEIR FIRE FOR LONG, CAP!
IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, CAPTAIN MARVEL CHANGES FROM A BEING OF FLESH AND BLOOD TO ONE OF LIGHT...AND LIGHTNING!
ZZRAK
GYAAA!

DON'T WORRY, THE NUMBNESS SHOULD FADE SOON... I KEPT MY VOLTAGE LOW. MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU WON'T BE SO TRIGGER-HAPPY!
I CAN'T STAND WISE-MOUTH DAMES! NOW THAT SHE'S SOLID AGAIN, I'LL SHUT HER UP --BUT GOOD!
WHU?
I THOUGHT THERE WAS ANOTHER RAT YET TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR! HARD TO HIT A LIVING HOLOGRAM, ISN'T IT?
WOULD YOU CARE TO DO THE HONORS, WASP?
LOVE TO, C.M.!
YEOWW!
WELL! A LITTLE BIO-ELECTRIC STING TO THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM, AND YOU'RE A NEW SKRULL!
WHY, YOU LITTLE--
WATCH YOUR MOUTH, LOUIE--
--YOU KNOW I DON'T ALLOW ROUGH TALK AROUND LADIES... EVEN IF THESE TWO DID JUST MAKE YOU ALL LOOK LIKE SAPS!
GO CHANGE YOUR FACE, WILLYA? YOU LOOK STUPID IN GREEN!

WELCOME TO BIG CASINO, BOYS AND GIRLS! I'M THE BOSS OF THIS OPERATION... FLOYD DONAHUE'S THE NAME. YOU CAN CALL ME MR. DONAHUE!
WE'RE THE AVENGERS, AND WE'RE TRAVELING UNDER AN ASSURANCE OF SAFE PASSAGE FROM GENERAL ZEDRAO!
IZZAT SO?
IN THAT CASE, I APOLOGIZE FOR MY BOYS' BEHAVIOR.
THIS ALL COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED, IF YOUR "BOYS" HAD ALLOWED ME TO PRODUCE MY STATUS CODE!
AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE, SHORTY?
MAJOR SYRRO OF THE IMPERIAL ARMADA! I AM UNDER DIRECT ORDER TO CONDUCT THE AVENGERS TO THE IMPERIAL POWER ASTEROID, AND YOU ARE DELAYING US!
TAKE IT EASY, SOLDIER. HOWCUM ZEDRAO AUTHORIZED THIS?
THERE WAS AN ALLIANCE OF SORTS WITH THE AVENGERS. THEY HELPED US DEFEAT THE MERCENARY FORCES OF NEBULA.
OH, YEAH? I HEARD OF THIS NEBULA... PRETTY TOUGH COOKIE.
SO YER HEADED FOR THE POWER ASTEROID! US, TOO. SMALL GALAXY, AIN'T IT?
YA KNOW, WE MIGHT JUST BE ABLE TO SCRATCH EACH OTHER'S BACKS. COME ON WITH ME... THERE'S A GENT YOU OUGHTTA MEET!

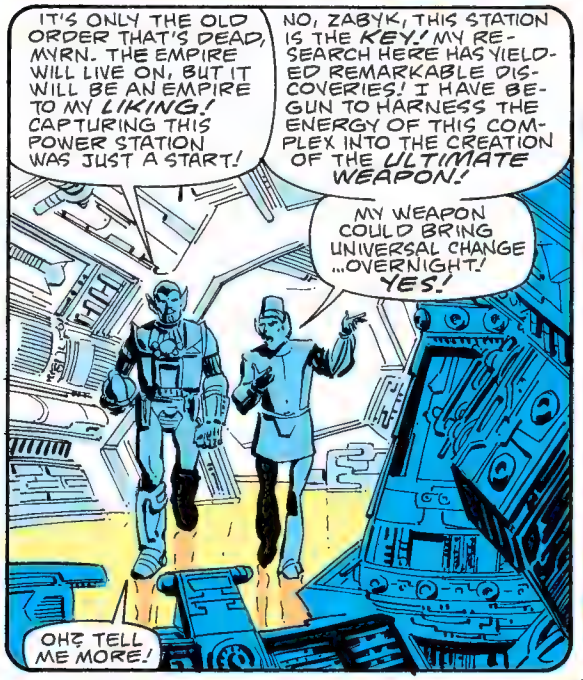

YOU CAME TO MEE... FROM OUT OF NOWHERE... LEAVING ME WITH... A MEM-MOR-REE!
WAIT HERE A MINUTE... I BETTER MAKE SURE THE GUY'S DECENT!
ZOUNDS! WINE... GAMING... WOMEN...
HEY, THIS AIN'T CALLED THE "BIG CASINO" FOR NUTHIN', YA KNOW!
I COULD GROW TO LIKE THIS PLACE!
IT'S LIKE EVERY OLD GANGSTER FILM I'VE EVER SEEN... COME TO LIFE! AND I THOUGHT I WAS AN ANACHRONISM!
IT'S UNCANNY HOW THEY'VE CAPTURED THE PERIOD! AS A BOY GROWING UP IN NEW YORK, I SAW A LOT OF PLACES THAT LOOKED MUCH LIKE THIS!
CAREFUL, CAP. YOU'RE DATING YOURSELF!
HOW CAN YOU STAND AND JOKE? EACH MINUTE SPENT HERE KEEPS US FROM OUR GOAL!

KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON, DAGWOOD. YOU'LL GET THERE!
COME ON IN, FOLKS...YOU, TOO, SHORTY...
...AND SAY HELLO TO BIG CASINO'S SPECIAL CUSTOMER--
--PRINCE DEZAN.
I GREET YOU, AVENGERS. MR. DONAHUE TELLS ME WE HAVE SIMILAR GOALS.
PRINCE DEZAN ...FREE?!?
DONAHUE, HOW CAN YOU HARBOR THIS... THIS...
WHO--THE PRINCE? EASY! HE'S PAYING ME PLENTY!
WHAT'S GOING ON, SYRRO? WHO IS THIS HELMETED SKRULL?
HE'S THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE LATE EMPEROR DORREK...
...AND A TRAITOR TO HIS OWN KIND! HE WAS EXILED TO A REMOTE PRISON WORLD, WHEN HIS UN-SKRULL ACTIVITIES WERE DISCOVERED.
HE IS THE MOST DANGEROUS SKRULL IN ALL THE GALAXY.
I WON'T DENY THAT MUCH OF WHAT YOUR ESCORT SAYS IS TRUE. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER SKRULL AT LARGE WHO IS FAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN I.
AND HE HAS IN HIS GRASP A WEAPON WHICH COULD DESTROY ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE EMPIRE!

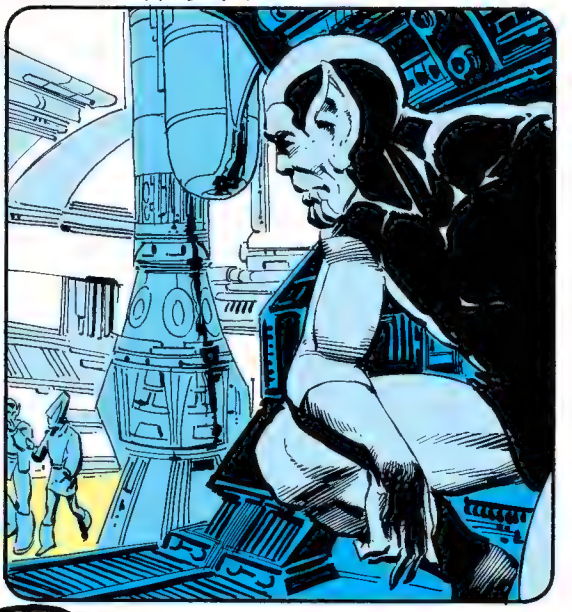

I SEE THE DISBELIEF IN YOUR EYES, BUT IT IS FRIGHTENINGLY TRUE. I KNOW TOO WELL THE ONE OF WHOM I SPEAK...
"...HIS NAME IS ZABYK. IN OUR YOUNGER DAYS, HE, I, AND A THIRD BRASH YOUTH NAMED MYRN WERE INSEPARABLE. FOR YEARS, WE PLOTTED WAYS TO CHANGE THE FLAWS WE PERCEIVED IN IMPERIAL SOCIETY...
"IN TIME, ZABYK AND I HAD A FALLING OUT... BUT BY THEN, OUR ACTIVITIES HAD DRAWN PUBLIC NOTICE.
"AS SYRRO TOLD YOU, MY RADICAL TIES WERE DISCOVERED, AND I WAS IMPRISONED... MY FACE HIDDEN AND MY SHAPE-SHIFTING POWERS HELD IN CHECK BY THE INHIBITOR MASK I YET WEAR.
"ZABYK WENT UNDERGROUND, FLEEING TO THE NETHER REACHES OF THE GALAXY, WHERE--I HAVE LEARNED--HE FORMED A NEW, MORE RADICAL ORGANIZATION.
"MYRN'S PART IN OUR ACTIVITIES WAS NEVER DISCOVERED. DISILLUSIONED, HE IMMERSED HIMSELF IN STUDY. HE BECAME ONE OF THE EMPIRE'S GREATEST SCIENTISTS, AND WAS PUT IN CHARGE OF THE POWER ASTEROID.
"HE HAD A BRIGHT AND PROMISING LIFE...
"...UNTIL GALACTUS CAME TO THRONE-WORLD!
"IMAGINE MYRN'S REACTION, AS HE WATCHED A WORLD BE DEVOURED BEFORE HIS EYES!
"FROM WHAT I'VE LEARNED, IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIS MIND TO TAKE.

"NO CORNER OF THE EMPIRE ESCAPED THE MAD STATE OF CHAOS CAUSED BY THRONEWORLD'S DESTRUCTION. IT BECAME FRIGHTENINGLY EASY FOR A SMALL FORCE TO SEIZE THE FACILITY."

BY THE DARK NEBULA, IT IS YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR OLD COMRADE?
I'D NEVER FORGET YOU, ZABYK. AS FOR ME, I WAS IN CHARGE HERE BEFORE... BEFORE EVERYTHING CAME TO AN END.


IT'S ONLY THE OLD ORDER THAT'S DEAD, MYRN. THE EMPIRE WILL LIVE ON, BUT IT WILL BE AN EMPIRE TO MY LIKING! CAPTURING THIS POWER STATION WAS JUST A START!
NO, ZABYK, THIS STATION IS THE KEY! MY RESEARCH HERE HAS YIELDED REMARKABLE DISCOVERIES! I HAVE BEGUN TO HARNESS THE ENERGY OF THIS COMPLEX INTO THE CREATION OF THE ULTIMATE WEAPON!
MY WEAPON COULD BRING UNIVERSAL CHANGE ...OVERNIGHT!
YES!
OH? TELL ME MORE!

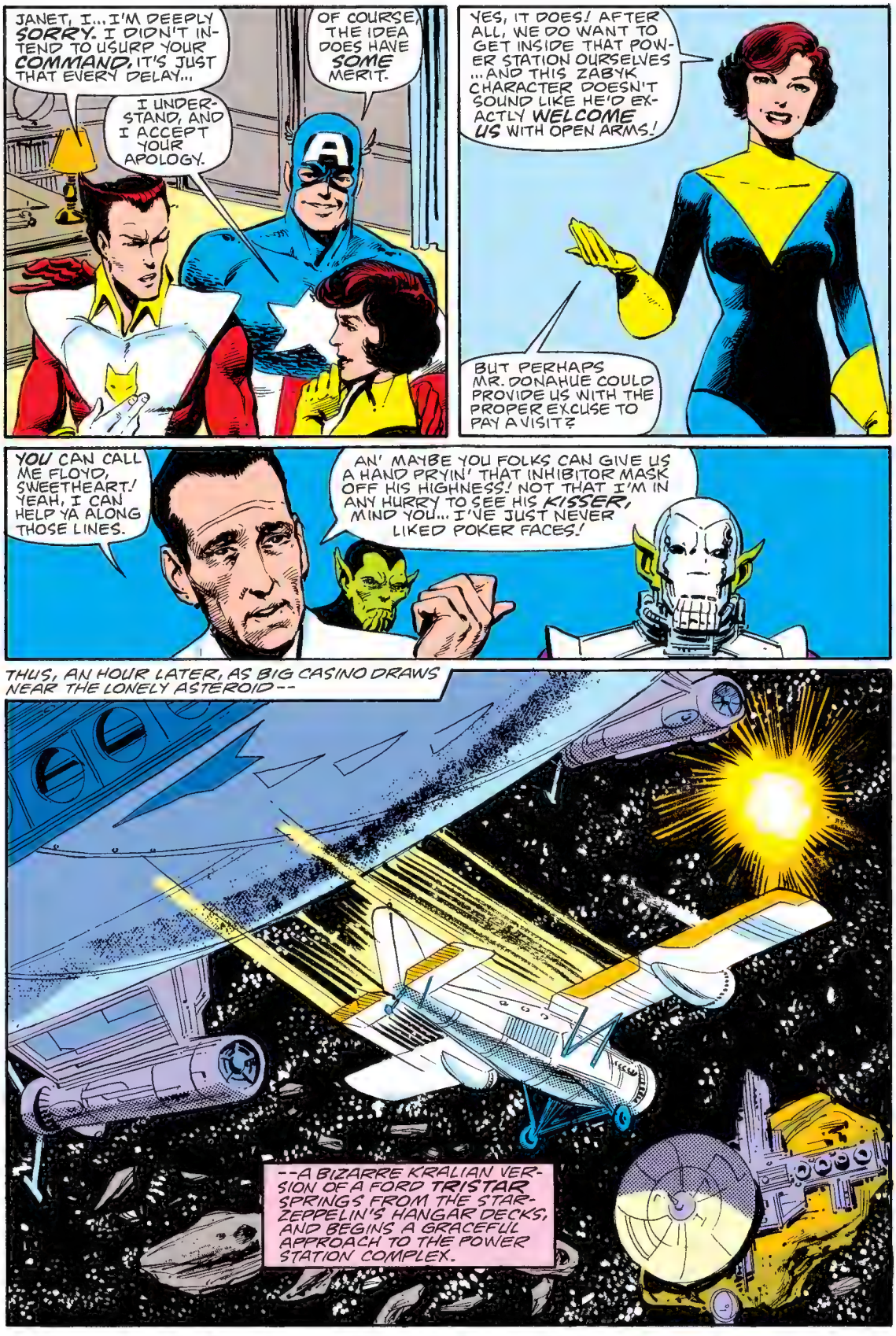
"BUT WHILE MYRN BABBLED ON, HE AND ZABYK WERE UNAWARE THAT THEIR EVERY WORD HAD BEEN OVERHEARD BY THE SKRULL WARRIOR RAKSOR."

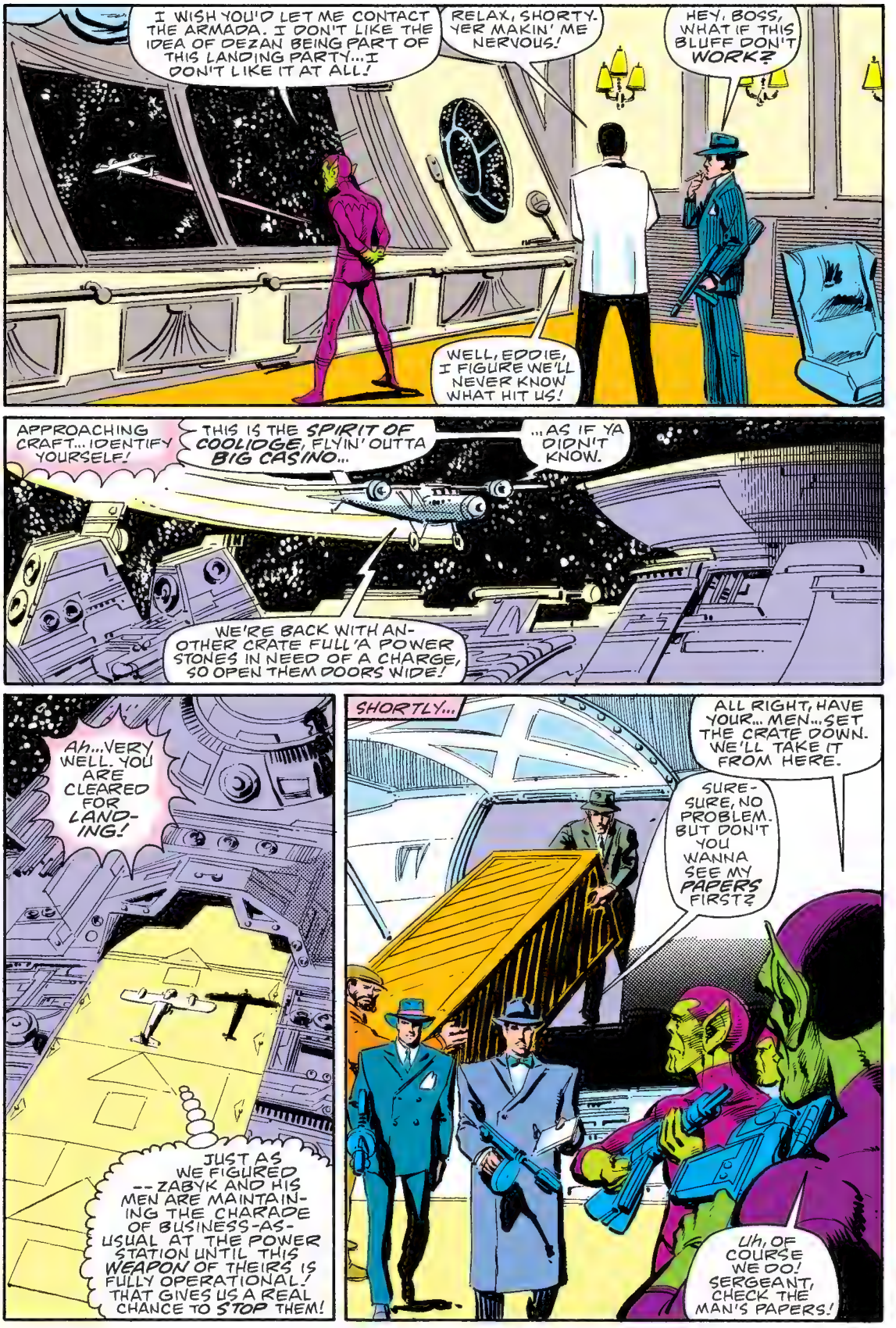


IT IS AS PRINCE DEZAN SAID. I HAD BEEN RETURNED TO THE POWER ASTEROID AFTER A MONTHS-LONG MISSION OUTSIDE THE GALAXY.* TO FIND THRONEWORLD REDUCED TO DRIFTING DEBRIS WAS NUMBING.
WHAT I HEARD MYRN PROPOSE SHOCKED ME TO MY SENSES. UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS FORCED TO FLEE BEFORE I WAS DISCOVERED BY ZABYK'S GUARDS.
BUT I KNEW THERE WAS ONE SKRULL WHO MIGHT KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH ZABYK AND MYRN.

*DEPICTED IN X-MEN #137 AND F.F. ANNUAL #18.

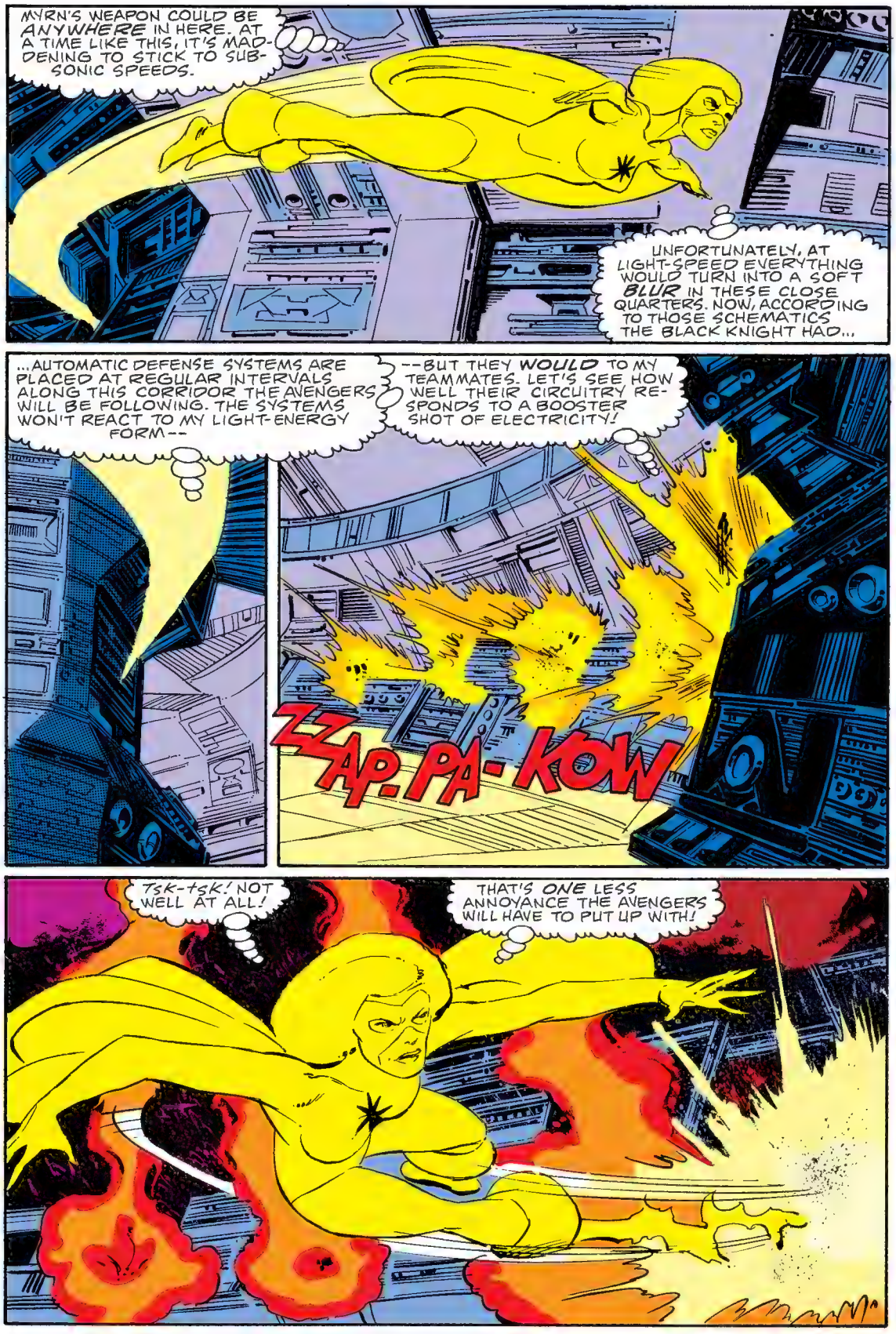
SO YOU FREED DEZAN?! WHAT CAN HE DO TO STOP THEM?
WE WERE JUST DISCUSSING THAT. ZABYK LOVES POWER TOO MUCH TO GIVE UP, BUT I MAY BE ABLE TO TALK MYRN TO HIS SENSES.
Bah, RAKSOR'S THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT TO HIS SENSES! WHY DIDN'T YOU CONTACT THE ARMADA?
I TRIED, BUT YOUR BLESSED ARMADA HAD SEALED OFF ITS PRECIOUS BASE PLANETOID.*
*TRUE, AS REVEALED IN AVENGERS #259.
AND YOU THINK YOU CAN TRUST DEZAN? FOOL, IF SOME ULTIMATE WEAPON IS BEING CONSTRUCTED WITHIN THE POWER ASTEROID, THAT IS THE LAST PLACE THIS TRAITOR SHOULD BE TAKEN!
WHAT WOULD YOU DO, MUDWORM--HAVE THE ARMADA WARP IN WITH GUNS BLAZING?
THE ASTEROID HAS POWER ENOUGH TO HOLD THEM OFF TILL DOOMSDAY... WHICH WOULDN'T BE LONG IN FOLLOWING! NO, WE MUST USE DECEPTION! A SMALL COMMANDO FORCE COULD BE THE SOLUTION, OR--!
OR NOTHING! THE AVENGERS ARE A SMALL GROUP, POWERFUL ENOUGH TO GAIN ENTRY TO THE POWER STATION AND END ANY THREAT THAT MIGHT EXIST.
WELL... YES, YOU PROBABLY COULD.
THEN IT'S SETTLED!
HOLD IT, STARFOX! WE NEED A LITTLE PLANNING BEFORE WE RUSH INTO ANYTHING--AND THERE IS A CHAIN OF COMMAND!
YES, I DON'T RECALL APPOINTING YOU GROUP SPOKESMAN!

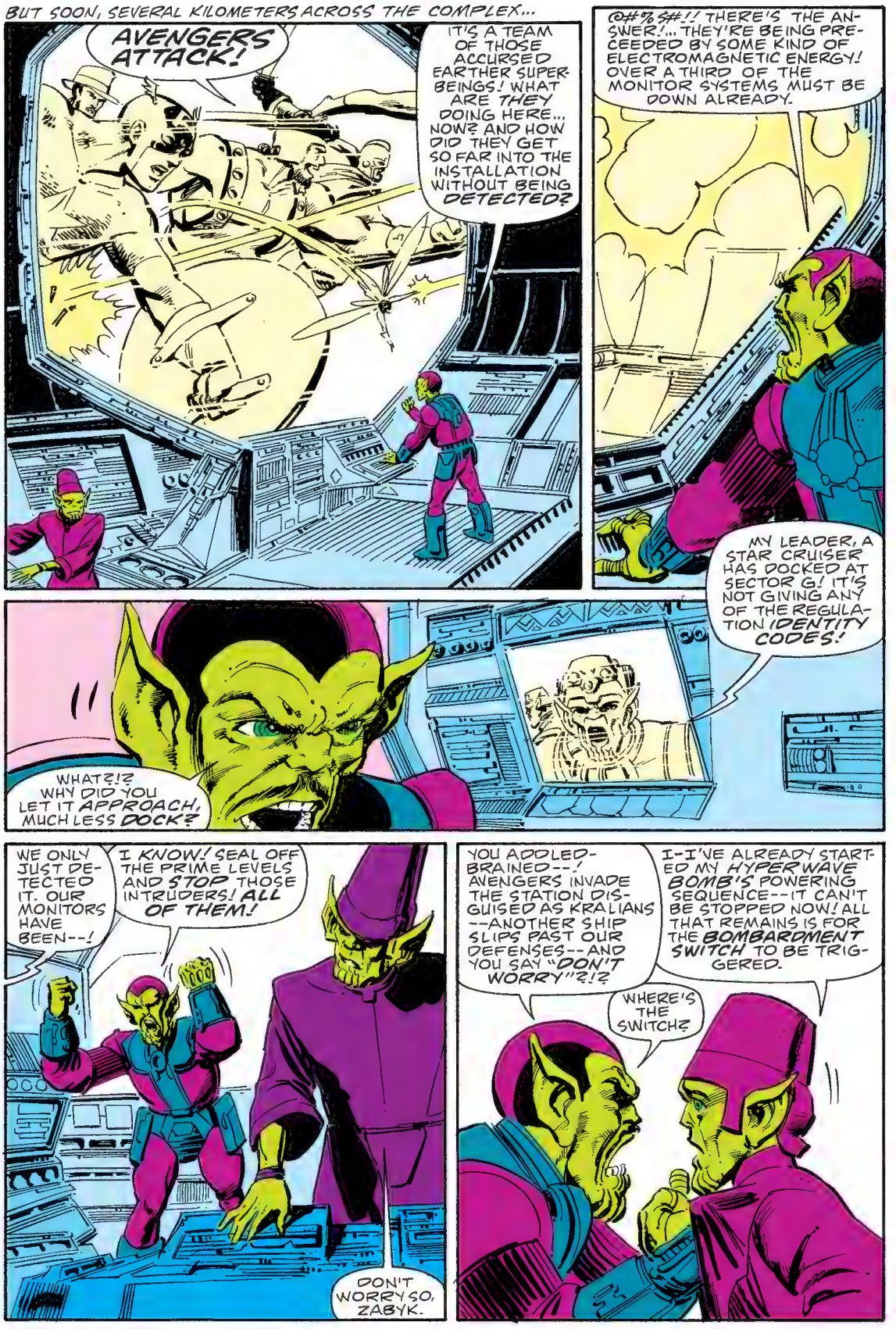

JANET, I... I'M DEEPLY SORRY. I DIDN'T INTEND TO USURP YOUR COMMAND, IT'S JUST THAT EVERY DELAY...
I UNDERSTAND, AND I ACCEPT YOUR APOLOGY.
OF COURSE, THE IDEA DOES HAVE SOME MERIT.
YES, IT DOES! AFTER ALL, WE DO WANT TO GET INSIDE THAT POWER STATION OURSELVES ...AND THIS ZABYK CHARACTER DOESN'T SOUND LIKE HE'D EXACTLY WELCOME US WITH OPEN ARMS!
BUT PERHAPS MR. DONAHUE COULD PROVIDE US WITH THE PROPER EXCUSE TO PAY A VISIT?
YOU CAN CALL ME FLOYD, SWEETHEART! YEAH, I CAN HELP YA ALONG THOSE LINES.
AN' MAYBE YOU FOLKS CAN GIVE US A HAND PRYIN' THAT INHIBITOR MASK OFF HIS HIGHNESS! NOT THAT I'M IN ANY HURRY TO SEE HIS KISSER, MIND YOU... I'VE JUST NEVER LIKED POKER FACES!
THUS, AN HOUR LATER, AS BIG CASINO DRAWS NEAR THE LONELY ASTEROID--
--A BIZARRE KRALIAN VERSION OF A FORD TRISTAR SPRINGS FROM THE STARZEPPELIN'S HANGAR DECKS, AND BEGINS A GRACEFUL APPROACH TO THE POWER STATION COMPLEX.

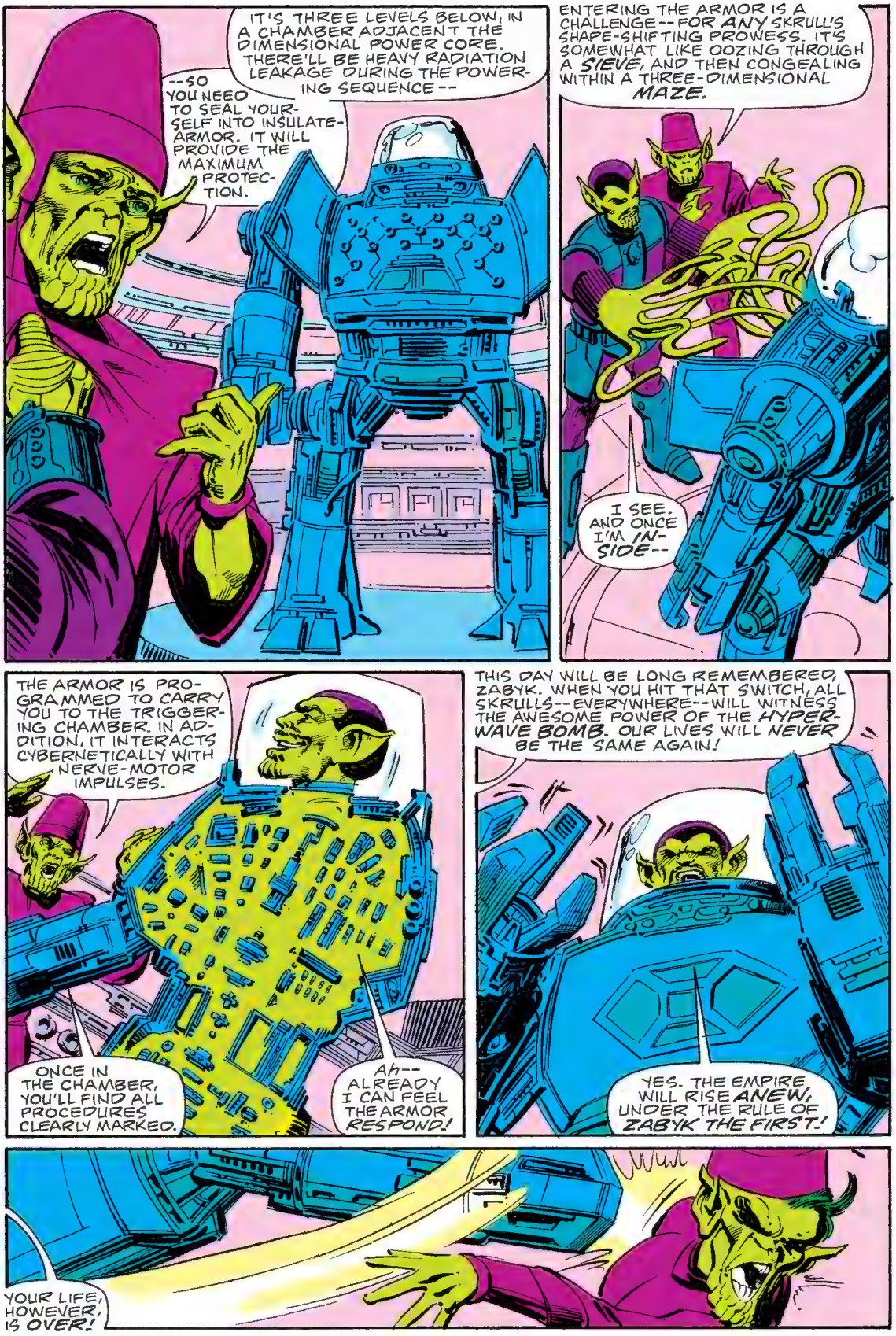

I WISH YOU'D LET ME CONTACT THE ARMADA. I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF DEZAN BEING PART OF THIS LANDING PARTY...I DON'T LIKE IT AT ALL!
RELAX, SHORTY. YER MAKIN' ME NERVOUS!
HEY, BOSS, WHAT IF THIS BLUFF DON'T WORK?
WELL, EDDIE, I FIGURE WE'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT US!
APPROACHING CRAFT... IDENTIFY YOURSELF!
THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF COOLIDGE, FLYIN' OUTTA BIG CASINO...
...AS IF YA DIDN'T KNOW.
WE'RE BACK WITH ANOTHER CRATE FULL 'A POWER STONES IN NEED OF A CHARGE, SO OPEN THEM DOORS WIDE!
Ah...VERY WELL. YOU ARE CLEARED FOR LANDING!
JUST AS WE FIGURED --ZABYK AND HIS MEN ARE MAINTAINING THE CHARADE OF BUSINESS-AS-USUAL AT THE POWER STATION UNTIL THIS WEAPON OF THEIRS IS FULLY OPERATIONAL! THAT GIVES US A REAL CHANCE TO STOP THEM!
SHORTLY...
ALL RIGHT, HAVE YOUR... MEN... SET THE CRATE DOWN. WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
SURE-SURE, NO PROBLEM. BUT DON'T YOU WANNA SEE MY PAPERS FIRST?
Uh, OF COURSE WE DO! SERGEANT, CHECK THE MAN'S PAPERS!

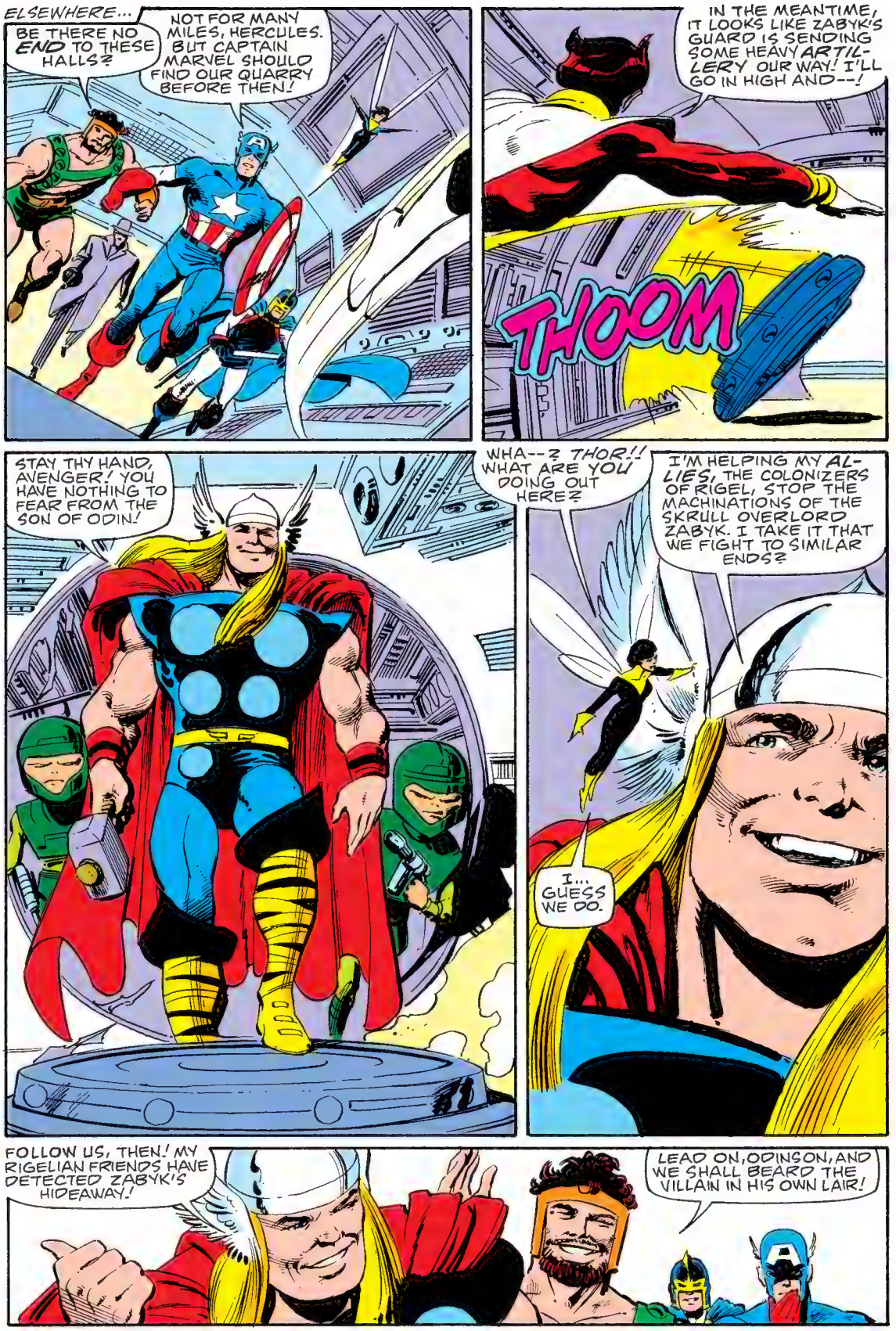
HERE YA GO. SAY, WHILE THOSE STONES ARE CHARGIN', MAYBE SOME OF YOUR BUDDIES WOULD LIKE TO TAKE SOME LIBERTY ON BIG CASINO?
MAYBE SOME OF 'EM ARE ON LIBERTY ALREADY, DUTCH. I DON'T REMEMBER THESE GUYS FROM THE LAST TIME WE WERE HERE!
THERE'S UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN A TROOP ROTATION SINCE YOUR LAST VISIT.
ODD... I'M GETTING A MUCH HIGHER BIO-SENSOR READING THAN I SHOULD FROM JUST FOUR BEINGS. BUT THAT COULD ONLY MEAN...
THERE'S SOMETHING ALIVE IN THIS CRATE! GET IT OPEN!
Hah! WHATEVER'S IN THERE IS IN FOR A SURPRISE!
NOT AS MUCH AS YOU ARE!
I DIDN'T CROWD YOU TOO MUCH, DID I, DANE?
NOT AT ALL, JAN. YOU CAN SHARE A CRATE WITH ME ANYTIME!
WHA--?

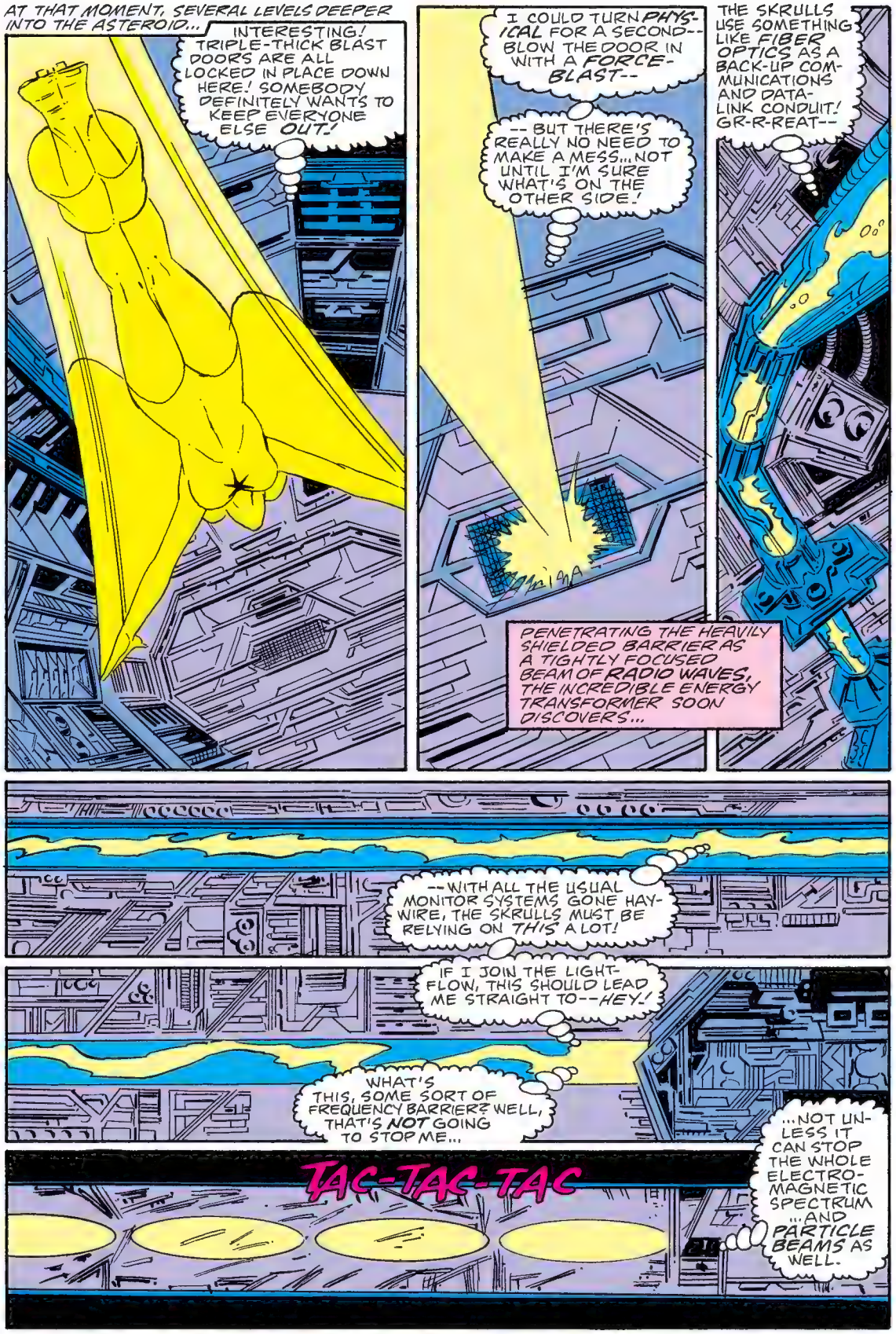
OH, WELL, WE COULDN'T MAINTAIN OUR COVER FOREVER! TAKE 'EM OUT FAST, AVENGERS!
DONE, CAP!
C.M., WHERE ARE YOU?
RIGHT HERE, CAP.. JUST FINISHING FRYING THE MONITOR SYSTEMS FOR THIS SECTION. A HEAVY DOSE OF INFRARED KNOCKED 'EM RIGHT OUT!
YOU WON'T BE SEEN FOR AWHILE, BUT THE DEAD MONITORS WILL PROBABLY CAUSE SOME GUARDS TO INVESTIGATE!
WE CAN HANDLE THEM. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO FIND WHERE MYRN IS HIDING HIS ULTIMATE WEAPON --AND THERE'S A LOT OF BASE TO SEARCH.
ON MY WAY!
AMAZING!
AYE, THAT SHE IS.

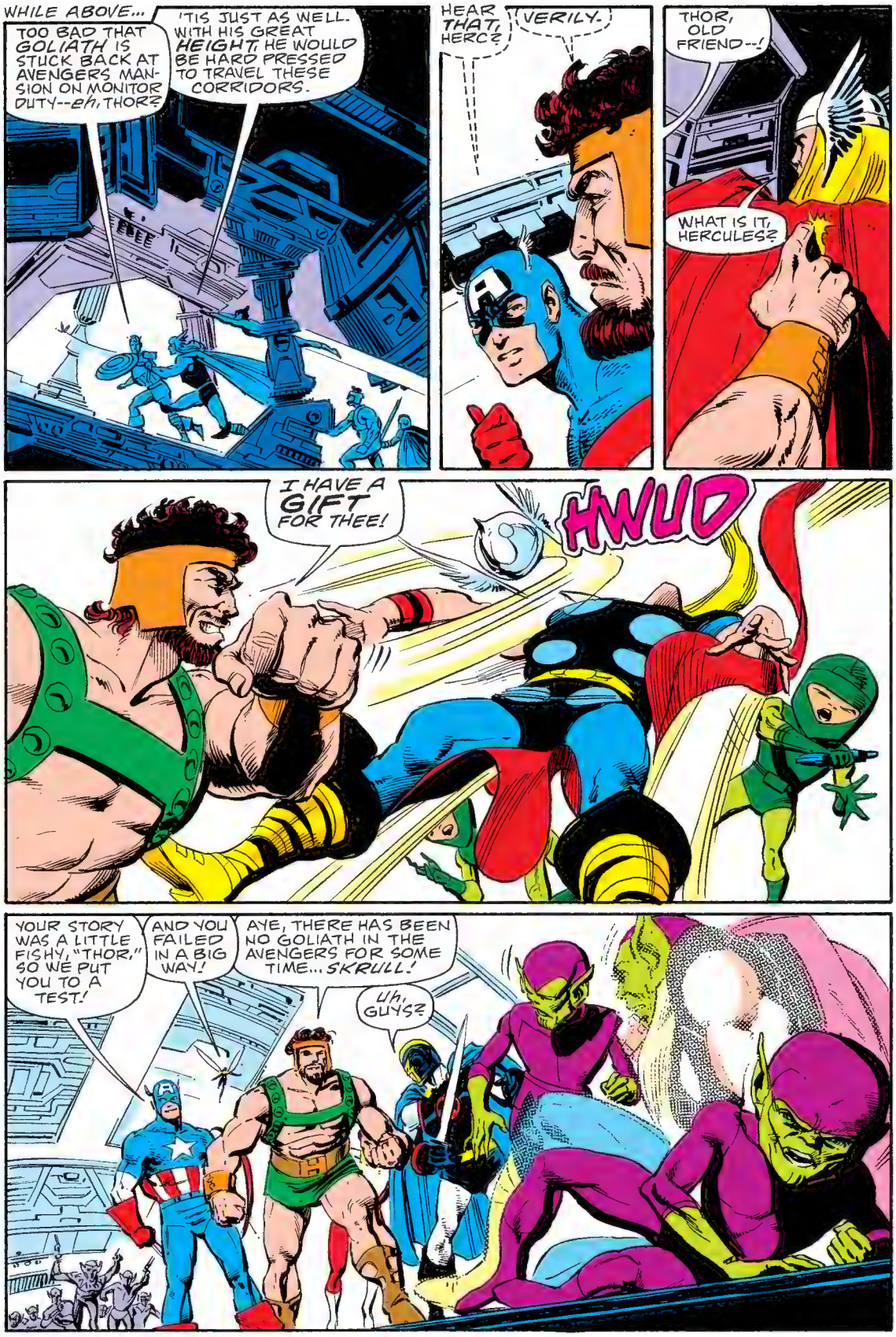

MYRN'S WEAPON COULD BE ANYWHERE IN HERE. AT A TIME LIKE THIS, IT'S MADDENING TO STICK TO SUBSONIC SPEEDS.
UNFORTUNATELY, AT LIGHT-SPEED EVERYTHING WOULD TURN INTO A SOFT BLUR IN THESE CLOSE QUARTERS. NOW, ACCORDING TO THOSE SCHEMATICS THE BLACK KNIGHT HAD...
...AUTOMATIC DEFENSE SYSTEMS ARE PLACED AT REGULAR INTERVALS ALONG THIS CORRIDOR THE AVENGERS WILL BE FOLLOWING. THE SYSTEMS WON'T REACT TO MY LIGHT-ENERGY FORM--
--BUT THEY WOULD TO MY TEAMMATES. LET'S SEE HOW WELL THEIR CIRCUITRY RESPONDS TO A BOOSTER SHOT OF ELECTRICITY!
ZZAP. PA-KOW
TSK-TSK! NOT WELL AT ALL!
THAT'S ONE LESS ANNOYANCE THE AVENGERS WILL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH!


BUT SOON, SEVERAL KILOMETERS ACROSS THE COMPLEX...
AVENGERS ATTACK!
IT'S A TEAM OF THOSE ACCURSED EARTHER SUPER-BEINGS! WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE... NOW? AND HOW DID THEY GET SO FAR INTO THE INSTALLATION WITHOUT BEING DETECTED?
@#%$#!! THERE'S THE ANSWER!... THEY'RE BEING PRECEEDED BY SOME KIND OF ELECTROMAGNETIC ENERGY! OVER A THIRD OF THE MONITOR SYSTEMS MUST BE DOWN ALREADY.
MY LEADER, A STAR CRUISER HAS DOCKED AT SECTOR G! IT'S NOT GIVING ANY OF THE REGULATION IDENTITY CODES!
WHAT?!? WHY DID YOU LET IT APPROACH, MUCH LESS DOCK?
WE ONLY JUST DETECTED IT. OUR MONITORS HAVE BEEN--!
I KNOW! SEAL OFF THE PRIME LEVELS AND STOP THOSE INTRUDERS! ALL OF THEM!
DON'T WORRY SO, ZABYK.
YOU ADDLED-BRAINED--! AVENGERS INVADE THE STATION DISGUISED AS KRALIANS --ANOTHER SHIP SLIPS PAST OUR DEFENSES--AND YOU SAY "DON'T WORRY"?!?
I-I'VE ALREADY STARTED MY HYPERWAVE BOMB'S POWERING SEQUENCE--IT CAN'T BE STOPPED NOW! ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR THE BOMBARDMENT SWITCH TO BE TRIGGERED.
WHERE'S THE SWITCH?


IT'S THREE LEVELS BELOW, IN A CHAMBER ADJACENT THE DIMENSIONAL POWER CORE. THERE'LL BE HEAVY RADIATION LEAKAGE DURING THE POWERING SEQUENCE--
--SO YOU NEED TO SEAL YOURSELF INTO INSULATE-ARMOR. IT WILL PROVIDE THE MAXIMUM PROTECTION.
ENTERING THE ARMOR IS A CHALLENGE--FOR ANY SKRULL'S SHAPE-SHIFTING PROWESS. IT'S SOMEWHAT LIKE OOZING THROUGH A SIEVE, AND THEN CONGEALING WITHIN A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MAZE.
I SEE. AND ONCE I'M INSIDE--
THE ARMOR IS PROGRAMMED TO CARRY YOU TO THE TRIGGERING CHAMBER. IN ADDITION, IT INTERACTS CYBERNETICALLY WITH NERVE-MOTOR IMPULSES.
ONCE IN THE CHAMBER, YOU'LL FIND ALL PROCEDURES CLEARLY MARKED.
Ah--ALREADY I CAN FEEL THE ARMOR RESPOND!
THIS DAY WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED, ZABYK. WHEN YOU HIT THAT SWITCH, ALL SKRULLS--EVERYWHERE--WILL WITNESS THE AWESOME POWER OF THE HYPER-WAVE BOMB. OUR LIVES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN!
YES. THE EMPIRE WILL RISE ANEW, UNDER THE RULE OF ZABYK THE FIRST!
YOUR LIFE, HOWEVER, IS OVER!

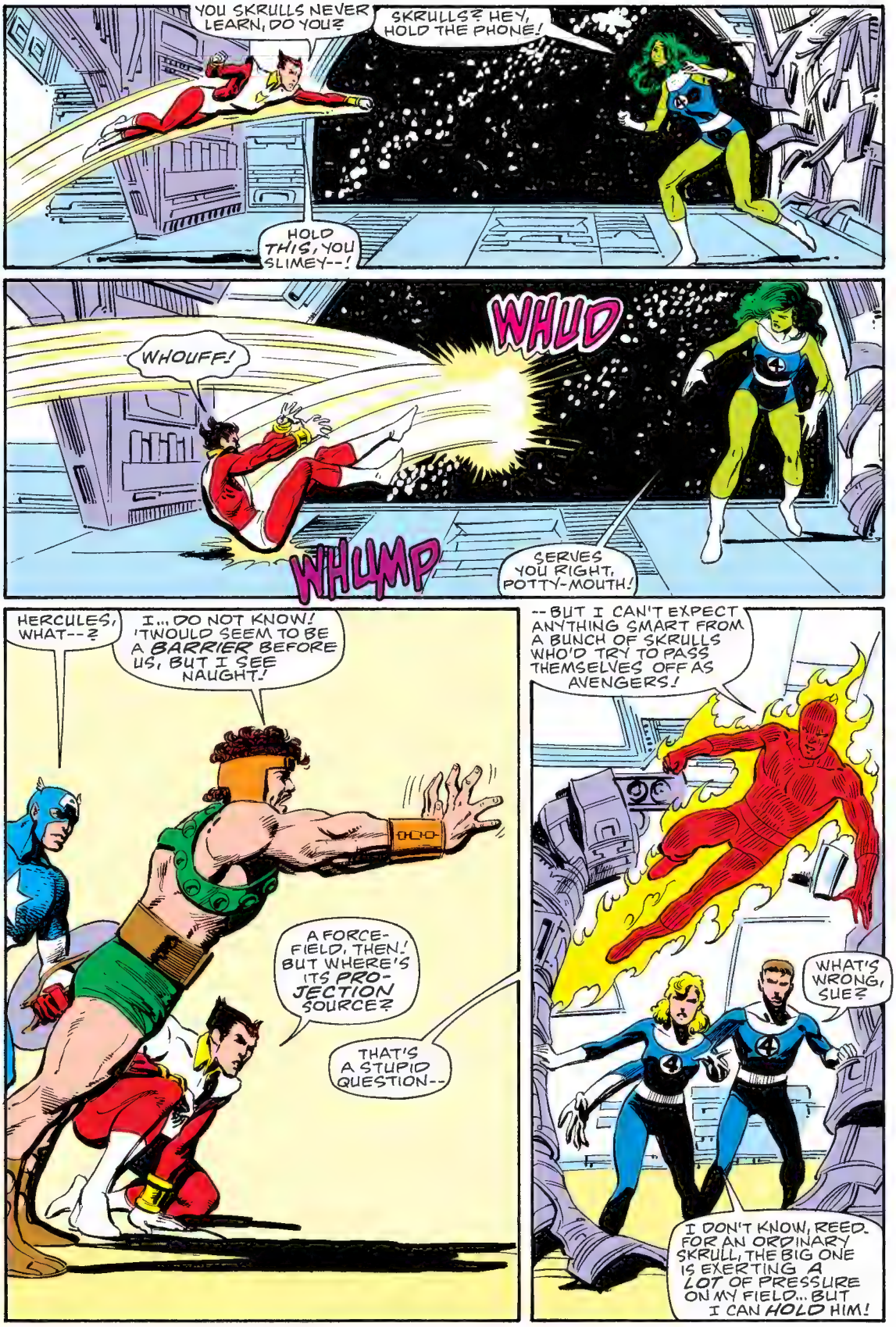

ELSEWHERE...
BE THERE NO END TO THESE HALLS?
NOT FOR MANY MILES, HERCULES. BUT CAPTAIN MARVEL SHOULD FIND OUR QUARRY BEFORE THEN!
IN THE MEANTIME, IT LOOKS LIKE ZABYK'S GUARD IS SENDING SOME HEAVY ARTILLERY OUR WAY! I'LL GO IN HIGH AND--!
THOOM
STAY THY HAND, AVENGER! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE SON OF ODIN!
WHA--? THOR!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?
I'M HELPING MY ALLIES, THE COLONIZERS OF RIGEL, STOP THE MACHINATIONS OF THE SKRULL OVERLORD ZABYK. I TAKE IT THAT WE FIGHT TO SIMILAR ENDS?
I... GUESS WE DO.
FOLLOW US, THEN! MY RIGELIAN FRIENDS HAVE DETECTED ZABYK'S HIDEAWAY!
LEAD ON, ODINSON, AND WE SHALL BEARD THE VILLAIN IN HIS OWN LAIR!

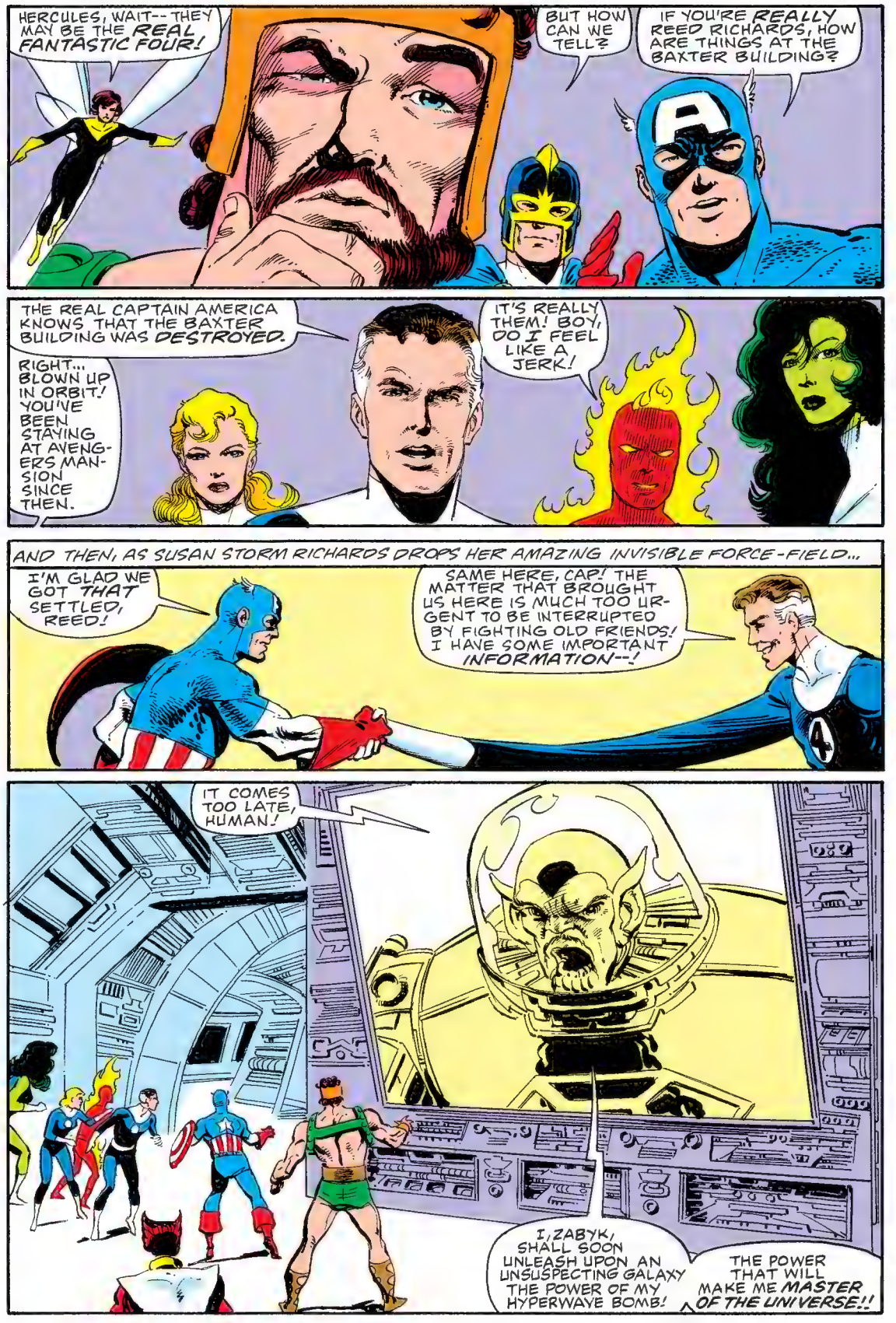

AT THAT MOMENT, SEVERAL LEVELS DEEPER INTO THE ASTEROID...
INTERESTING! TRIPLE-THICK BLAST DOORS ARE ALL LOCKED IN PLACE DOWN HERE! SOMEBODY DEFINITELY WANTS TO KEEP EVERYONE ELSE OUT!
I COULD TURN PHYSICAL FOR A SECOND-- BLOW THE DOOR IN WITH A FORCE-BLAST--
-- BUT THERE'S REALLY NO NEED TO MAKE A MESS...NOT UNTIL I'M SURE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE!
THE SKRULLS USE SOMETHING LIKE FIBER OPTICS AS A BACK-UP COMMUNICATIONS AND DATA-LINK CONDUIT! GR-R-REAT--
PENETRATING THE HEAVILY SHIELDED BARRIER AS A TIGHTLY FOCUSED BEAM OF RADIO WAVES, THE INCREDIBLE ENERGY TRANSFORMER SOON DISCOVERS...
--WITH ALL THE USUAL MONITOR SYSTEMS GONE HAYWIRE, THE SKRULLS MUST BE RELYING ON THIS A LOT!
IF I JOIN THE LIGHT-FLOW, THIS SHOULD LEAD ME STRAIGHT TO--HEY!
WHAT'S THIS, SOME SORT OF FREQUENCY BARRIER? WELL, THAT'S NOT GOING TO STOP ME...
TAC-TAC-TAC
...NOT UNLESS IT CAN STOP THE WHOLE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC SPECTRUM ...AND PARTICLE BEAMS AS WELL.

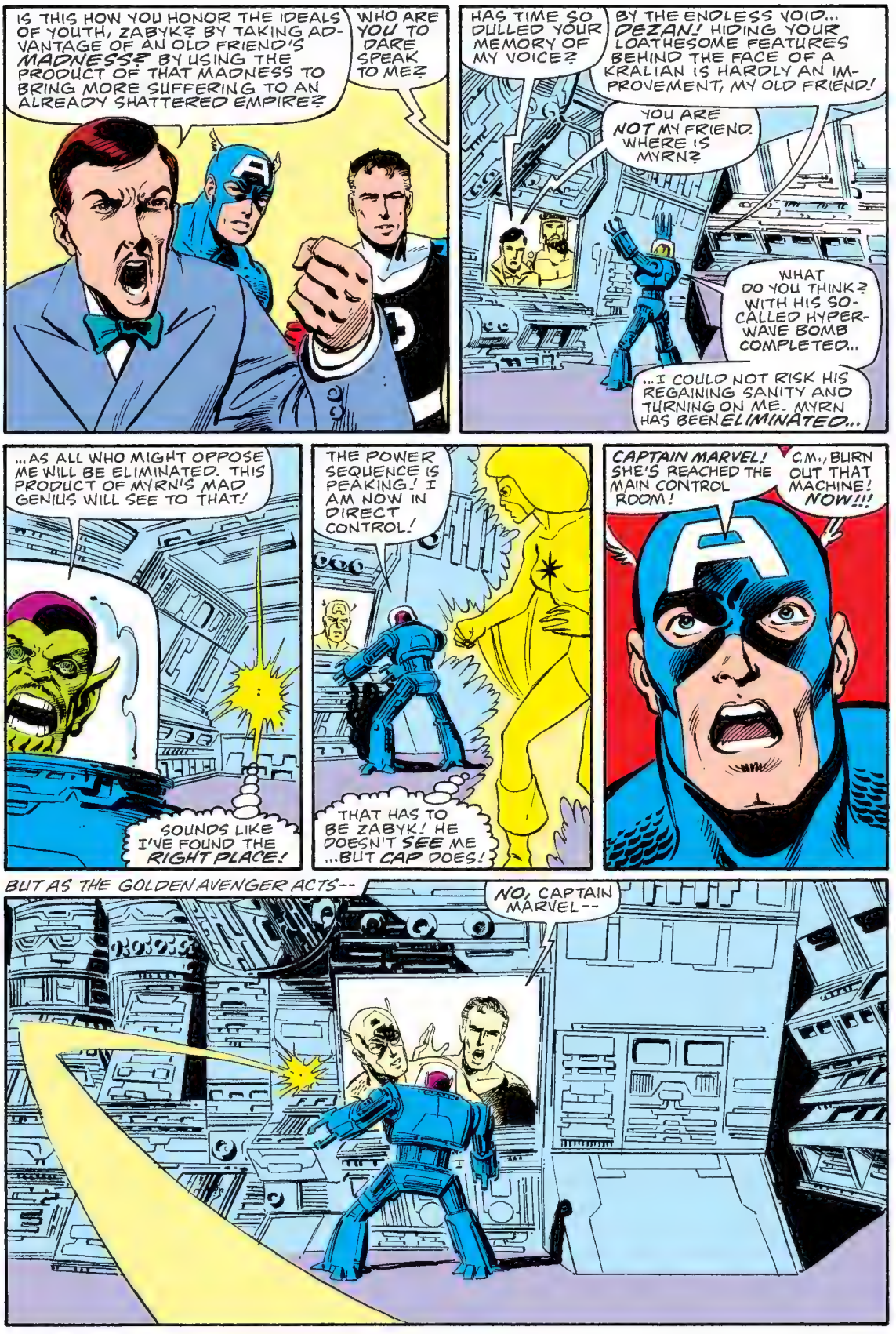

WHILE ABOVE...
TOO BAD THAT GOLIATH IS STUCK BACK AT AVENGERS MANSION ON MONITOR DUTY--eh, THOR?
'TIS JUST AS WELL. WITH HIS GREAT HEIGHT, HE WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO TRAVEL THESE CORRIDORS.
HEAR THAT, HERC?
VERILY.
THOR, OLD FRIEND--!
WHAT IS IT, HERCULES?
I HAVE A GIFT FOR THEE!
HWUD
YOUR STORY WAS A LITTLE FISHY, "THOR," SO WE PUT YOU TO A TEST!
AND YOU FAILED IN A BIG WAY!
AYE, THERE HAS BEEN NO GOLIATH IN THE AVENGERS FOR SOME TIME... SKRULL!
Uh, GUYS?

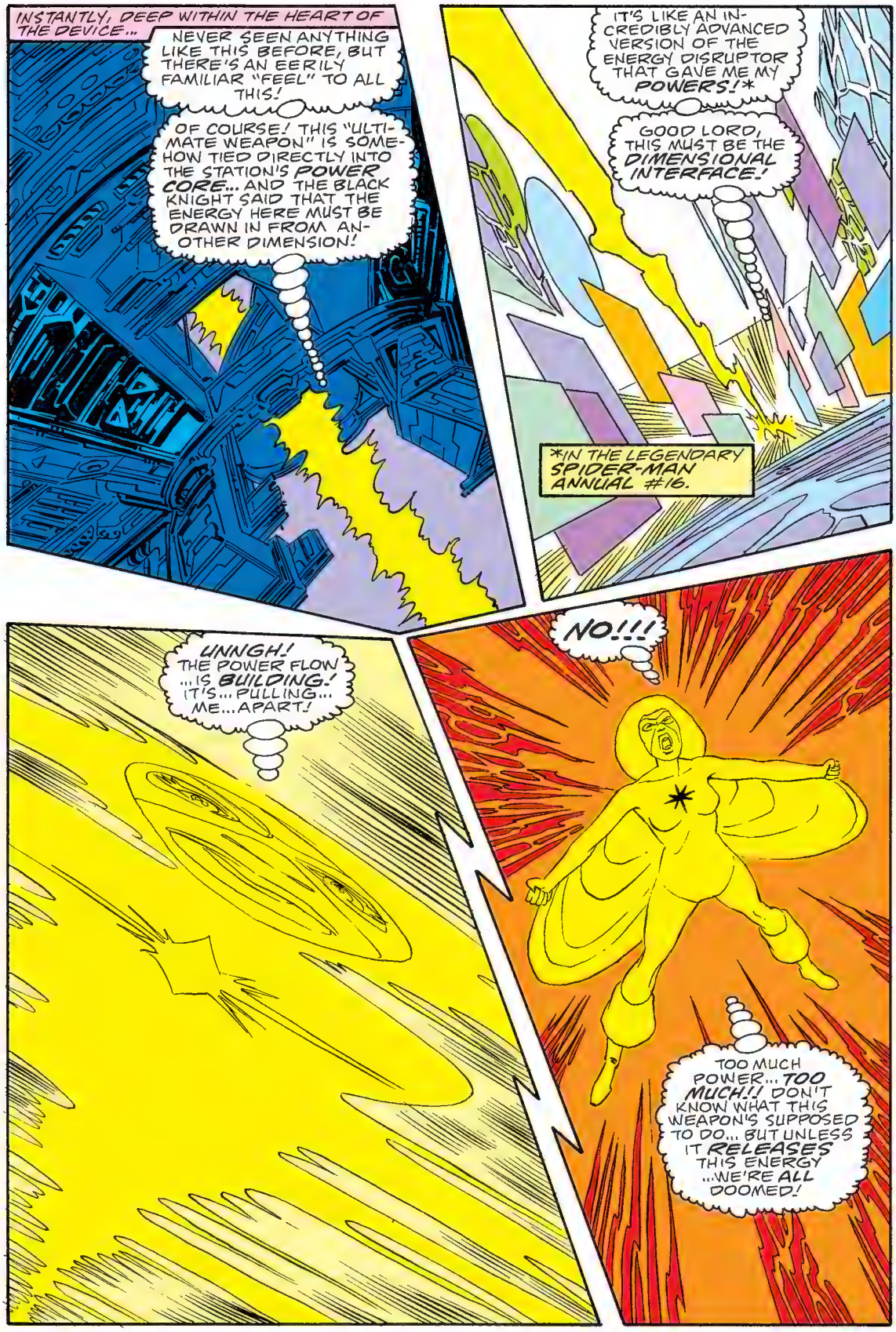
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE BEEN LED INTO AN AMBUSH!
OKAY, AVENGERS--
--YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!
THE TINY ONE ...SHE IS EVERY-WHERE!
SORRY, BOYS--BUT AN AMBUSH THAT'S EXPECTED RARE-LY WORKS!
Y-YOUR SWORD CUT THROUGH MY BLASTER! WHAT SORT OF MAGIC IS THIS?!
PRETTY GOOD MAGIC, I'D SAY!
Hrmph! THIS BATTLE IS TOO EASILY WON FOR THE SON OF ZEUS!
ASTOUNDING! THESE SKRULLS HAVE JUST ENOUGH OF A PLEASURE CENTER IN THEIR WRETCHED BRAINS FOR ME TO PSIONICLY STIMULATE!
WHERE IS ZABYK?
Oooh... I'D LOVE TO TELL YOU...BUT I DON'T KNOOOW!

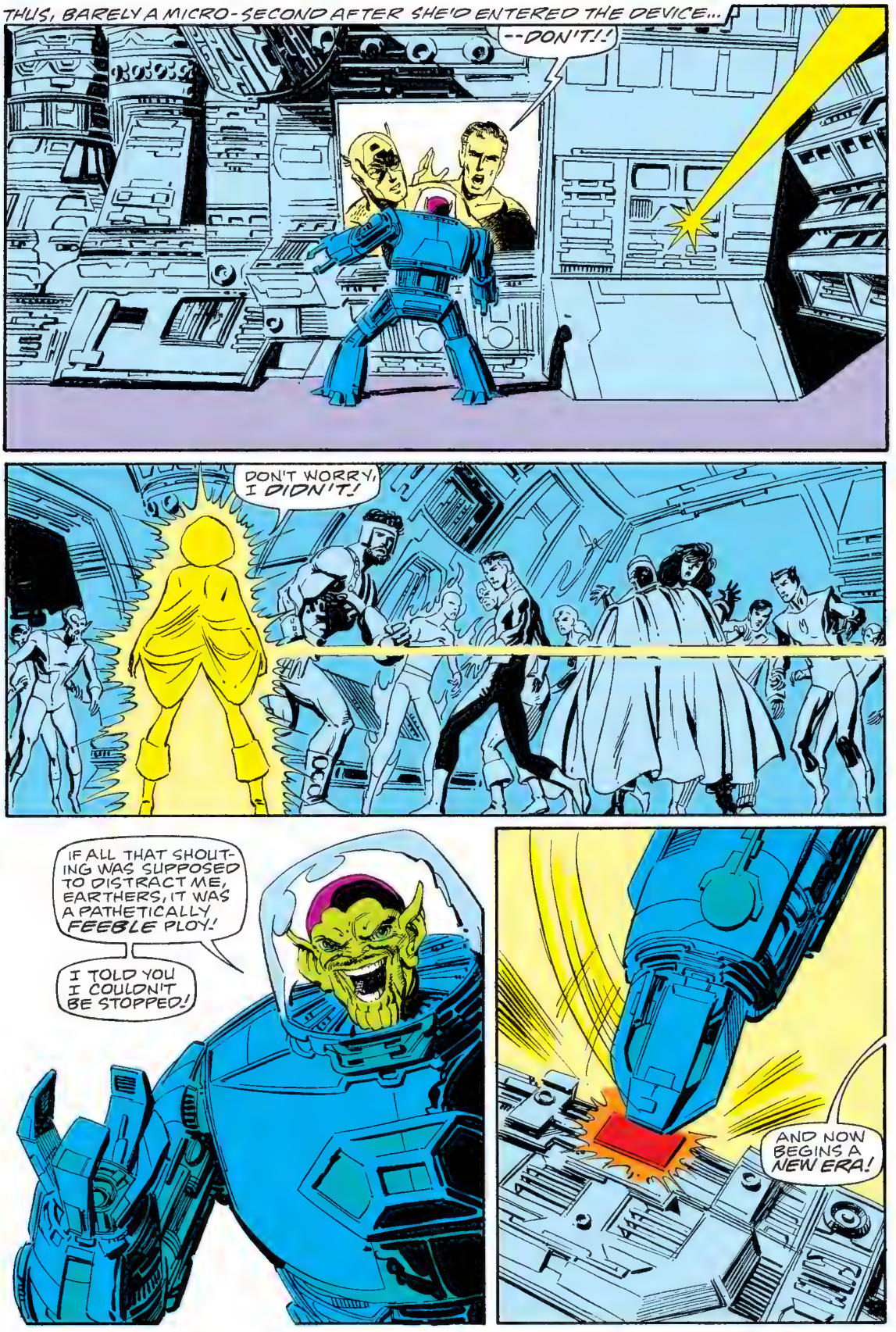
MAYBE THIS ONE CAN TELL US!
EVEN IF I DID KNOW, I WOULDN'T TELL YOU, EARTH-LOVER!
YOU THINK ME A KRALIAN? YOU'RE WRONG...
...HERE IS MY TRUE-FACE!
P-PRINCE D-DEZAN? I-I-I...
HE'S TERRIFIED. I'D BEST RE-ASSUME KRALIAN FEATURES BEFORE I SHOCK THEM ALL SPEECHLESS.
THEN, SUDDENLY...
HEADS UP, EVERYBODY, IT'S--
--THE SHE-HULK?!?
KRUNG
WHAT?
THE AVENGERS?!?


YOU SKRULLS NEVER LEARN, DO YOU?
SKRULLS? HEY, HOLD THE PHONE!
HOLD THIS, YOU SLIMEY--!
WHUD
WHOUFF!
WHUMP
SERVES YOU RIGHT, POTTY-MOUTH!
HERCULES, WHAT--?
I... DO NOT KNOW! 'TWOULD SEEM TO BE A BARRIER BEFORE US, BUT I SEE NAUGHT!
A FORCE-FIELD, THEN! BUT WHERE'S ITS PROJECTION SOURCE?
THAT'S A STUPID QUESTION--
--BUT I CAN'T EXPECT ANYTHING SMART FROM A BUNCH OF SKRULLS WHO'D TRY TO PASS THEMSELVES OFF AS AVENGERS!
WHAT'S WRONG, SUE?
I DON'T KNOW, REED. FOR AN ORDINARY SKRULL, THE BIG ONE IS EXERTING A LOT OF PRESSURE ON MY FIELD... BUT I CAN HOLD HIM!


HERCULES, WAIT-- THEY MAY BE THE REAL FANTASTIC FOUR!
BUT HOW CAN WE TELL?
IF YOU'RE REALLY REED RICHARDS, HOW ARE THINGS AT THE BAXTER BUILDING?
THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA KNOWS THAT THE BAXTER BUILDING WAS DESTROYED.
RIGHT... BLOWN UP IN ORBIT! YOU'VE BEEN STAYING AT AVENGERS MANSION SINCE THEN.
IT'S REALLY THEM! BOY, DO I FEEL LIKE A JERK!
AND THEN, AS SUSAN STORM RICHARDS DROPS HER AMAZING INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD...
I'M GLAD WE GOT THAT SETTLED, REED!
SAME HERE, CAP! THE MATTER THAT BROUGHT US HERE IS MUCH TOO URGENT TO BE INTERRUPTED BY FIGHTING OLD FRIENDS! I HAVE SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION--!
IT COMES TOO LATE, HUMAN!
I, ZABYK, SHALL SOON UNLEASH UPON AN UNSUSPECTING GALAXY THE POWER OF MY HYPERWAVE BOMB!
THE POWER THAT WILL MAKE ME MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE!!


IS THIS HOW YOU HONOR THE IDEALS OF YOUTH, ZABYK? BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF AN OLD FRIEND'S MADNESS? BY USING THE PRODUCT OF THAT MADNESS TO BRING MORE SUFFERING TO AN ALREADY SHATTERED EMPIRE?
WHO ARE YOU TO DARE SPEAK TO ME?
HAS TIME SO DULLED YOUR MEMORY OF MY VOICE?
BY THE ENDLESS VOID... DEZAN! HIDING YOUR LOATHESOME FEATURES BEHIND THE FACE OF A KRALIAN IS HARDLY AN IMPROVEMENT, MY OLD FRIEND!
YOU ARE NOT MY FRIEND. WHERE IS MYRN?
WHAT DO YOU THINK? WITH HIS SO-CALLED HYPER-WAVE BOMB COMPLETED...
...I COULD NOT RISK HIS REGAINING SANITY AND TURNING ON ME. MYRN HAS BEEN ELIMINATED...
...AS ALL WHO MIGHT OPPOSE ME WILL BE ELIMINATED. THIS PRODUCT OF MYRN'S MAD GENIUS WILL SEE TO THAT!
SOUNDS LIKE I'VE FOUND THE RIGHT PLACE!
THE POWER SEQUENCE IS PEAKING! I AM NOW IN DIRECT CONTROL!
THAT HAS TO BE ZABYK! HE DOESN'T SEE ME ...BUT CAP DOES!
CAPTAIN MARVEL! SHE'S REACHED THE MAIN CONTROL ROOM!
C.M., BURN OUT THAT MACHINE! NOW!!!
BUT AS THE GOLDEN AVENGER ACTS--
NO, CAPTAIN MARVEL--


INSTANTLY, DEEP WITHIN THE HEART OF THE DEVICE...
NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE, BUT THERE'S AN EERILY FAMILIAR "FEEL" TO ALL THIS!
OF COURSE! THIS "ULTIMATE WEAPON" IS SOMEHOW TIED DIRECTLY INTO THE STATION'S POWER CORE... AND THE BLACK KNIGHT SAID THAT THE ENERGY HERE MUST BE DRAWN IN FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION!
IT'S LIKE AN INCREDIBLY ADVANCED VERSION OF THE ENERGY DISRUPTOR THAT GAVE ME MY POWERS!*
GOOD LORD, THIS MUST BE THE DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE!
*IN THE LEGENDARY SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #16.
NO!!!
TOO MUCH POWER... TOO MUCH!! DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS WEAPON'S SUPPOSED TO DO... BUT UNLESS IT RELEASES THIS ENERGY ...WE'RE ALL DOOMED!
UNNGH! THE POWER FLOW ...IS BUILDING! IT'S... PULLING... ME... APART!


THUS, BARELY A MICRO-SECOND AFTER SHE'D ENTERED THE DEVICE...
--DON'T!-!
DON'T WORRY, I DIDN'T!
IF ALL THAT SHOUTING WAS SUPPOSED TO DISTRACT ME, EARTHERS, IT WAS A PATHETICALLY FEEBLE PLOY!
I TOLD YOU I COULDN'T BE STOPPED!
AND NOW BEGINS A NEW ERA!

IT BEGINS AS A LOW, BARELY AUDIBLE RUMBLE-- BUILDING AND BUILDING UNTIL EVERY SURFACE-- EVERY BEING-- WITHIN THE POWER STATION PULSES WITH A BONE-TINGLING VIBRATION!
IN SECONDS, THE ENTIRE ASTEROID THROBS TO THE BEAT OF AN ENERGY WAVE-FRONT WHICH RADIATES FROM THE MAMMOTH BROAD-CAST DISH-- THROUGH BOTH SPACE AND SUB-SPACE--SWEEPING ACROSS THE GALAXY AND BEYOND!

SIMULTANEOUSLY, EVERY SKRULL IN EXISTENCE IS SUDDENLY TRANSFIXED BY THE HYPERWAVE BOMBARDMENT -- THE EERIE ENERGIES PENETRATING TO THE CORE OF THEIR UNSTABLE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE!
NONE ARE SPARED! NOT THE SOLDIERS OF THE DISTANT ARMADA...
...NOT SHAPE-SHIFTED INVADERS IN OTHER GALAXIES...
...NOT THE SPECIALLY-TRAINED SKRULL ESPIONAGE AGENTS...
...NOT THE STAFF AND CLIENTELE OF BIG CASINO...
Z!Z
Ooooh!
I HAD ME A GLOW ON BEFORE, BUT NUTHIN' LIKE THIS!
AMBASSADOR, IS THAT GIFT FROM THE SKRULL CONSUL SUPPOSED TO BE LIGHT-EMITTING?

...NOT EVEN THE SKRULLS WITHIN THE ASTEROID FACILITY!
WHAT... WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US?
IT'S NOT AFFECTING US! ONLY...
...THE SKRULLS!!
ALL ARE AFFECTED!
NO... NO, IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! I AM SHIELDED! IT CAN'T WORK ON ME...
...NOT MEEEE!
CHA-VOOM
WELL, SCRATCH THAT SCREEN!
PRINCE DEZAN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M...NOT CERTAIN. I THINK SO.
I FULLY EXPECTED TO DIE, AND I DECIDED TO MEET DEATH WEARING MY TRUE-FACE...
...REPULSIVE AS IT MAY BE BY SKRULL STANDARDS, IT IS STILL MINE!
BUT THE CHANGE WAS MOST PAINFUL... THE EFFECT OF THE BOMBARDMENT FELT MUCH LIKE THAT OF THE INHIBITOR MASK.

I'M SORRY... I WISH I COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING. BUT THE ENERGY IN THE POWER CORE HAD ALREADY BUILT TO SUCH A STATE THAT I DIDN'T DARE STOP THE HYPERWAVE GENERATOR!
IF I HAD, THE DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE WOULD HAVE RIPPED APART!
THANK HEAVENS YOU REALIZED THAT, CAPTAIN MARVEL!
SUCH A BREECH WOULD'VE CAUSED OUR ENTIRE UNIVERSE TO COLLAPSE INTO ANOTHER...
...DESTROYING BOTH!
I'M NOT CERTAIN WHAT'S JUST HAPPENED, BUT I DO KNOW WHO'S TO BLAME! C.M., WHERE CAN WE FIND ZABYK?
MINUTES LATER...
REED SAYS THE RADIATION LEVELS ARE DOWN TO NORMAL, HERC! LET'S MAKE A NEW DOOR!
WHY, THIS FLIMSY BARRIER IS LESS THAN A FOOT THICK! 'TWILL TAKE BUT A FRACTION OF MY MIGHT!
help me... help me...
I HAD TO CHANGE SHAPE TO INFUSE WITH THIS ARMOR... NOW I CAN'T GET OUT!!!

YOU KILLED THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HELP YOU--
--THOUGH I DID NOT REALIZE IT AT THE TIME! I FOUND MYRN* DYING AND LEARNED THE PURPOSE OF HIS "BOMB"...TO STABILIZE THE DEVIANT GENETIC CODE OF ALL SKRULLS...
...EVERY-WHERE!
NO-NO-NO-NO... I WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE AFFECTED. THE ARMOR WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT ME.
*IN FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #19.
SO, POOR MAD MYRN ACCOMPLISHED WHAT WE NEVER COULD--HE HAS PERMANENTLY CHANGED SKRULL SOCIETY! BEFORE, IF THE TRUE-FACES OF OUR BIRTHLINGS WERE UNAPPEALING, WE COULD CHANGE THEM...
...OR BE COERCED INTO CHANGING THEM. OUR FACES, OUR FORMS COULD BE CHANGED AT WILL. NOW, THAT CHOICE IS GONE. ALL SKRULLS ARE TRAPPED FOREVER IN THE FORM THEY WERE IN WHEN THE BOMB WENT OFF. WHAT CHAOS WILL BEFALL US...NOW THAT WE WILL ALL BE SO DIFFERENT?
BEING DIFFERENT IS NOT A WEAKNESS, PRINCE.
MY PEOPLE HAVE AN IDEAL...A BELIEF IN EQUALITY OF THE MIND, OF THE SOUL ...EQUALITY, NOT SAMENESS. OUR NATION HAS EMBRACED ALL DIFFERENT SIZES, SHAPES, AND COLORS OF PEOPLE--
--AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I THINK, WE'VE GROWN EVER STRONGER IN OUR PURSUIT OF LIBERTY... AND OF PEACE!
PEACE AND LIBERTY, eh? THOSE ARE LOFTY GOALS. I WOULD HOPE THAT MY RACE COULD ONE DAY ACHIEVE SUCH GOALS.
PERHAPS, THERE IS YET HOPE.

FINALLY, HOURS LATER...
ZABYK SURELY HAD A FEW SCREWS LOOSE. EVEN IF HE HAD RETAINED HIS SHAPE-CHANGING ABILITIES, HE'D BE THE MOST HATED SKRULL IN THE EMPIRE FOR WHAT HE'D DONE--NOT THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR EMPEROR!
I'M SURPRISED THAT GENERAL ZEDRAO TOOK ALL OF THIS SO CALMLY, WHEN SYRRO RADIOED HIS INITIAL REPORT.
I'M NOT, DANE--
--THE GENERAL IS PRAGMATIC AND PRETTY MUCH UNFLAPPABLE. STILL, HE'S GOING TO HAVE HIS HANDS FULL WITH THOSE UNDER HIS COMMAND, WHEN IT REALLY SINKS IN WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEM.
AND AFTER ALL THAT, WE STILL COULDN'T FIND ANY SIGNS OF NEBULA?
AFRAID NOT, CAP. IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY TRACES TO FOLLOW, THEY WERE OBLITERATED BY THE ENERGY WAVE FROM MYRN'S MACHINE.
WELL, THERE'S ONE THING THAT'S STILL BOTHERING ME! PRINCE DEZAN SEEMED LIKE SUCH A REASONABLE SOUL. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT HE COULD HAVE DONE THAT WAS SO AWFUL!
I WONDERED ABOUT THAT MYSELF, UNTIL I HAD A PRIVATE TALK WITH HIM.
EVERY SOCIETY HAS ITS REBELS WHO WANT TO CHANGE THE WAY THINGS RUN--BUT AMONG THE SKRULLS, PRINCE DEZAN WAS UNIQUE. YOU SEE, HE WANTED TO REVERSE MILLENNIA OF WARFARE AND SUBJUGATION.
HE WAS THE GREATEST SKRULL OUTCAST OF ALL...
...HE WANTED PEACE.
END

Marvel Fanfare #22 (September 1985) Fantastic Four pinup
by Ken Steacy

Marvel Age Annual #1 (1985) promoted Marvel's upcoming storylines via a "telephone" story. Byrne's Fantastic Four page reused art from *FF* #282 page 22.

THE NEXT DAY, AFTER FOURTEEN HOURS OF PEACE AND QUIET, IT BEGINS AGAIN. IT BEGINS AT AVENGERS MANSION, IN THE TEMPORARY QUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
DRRIIING!
AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE MICROVERSE--THE FANTASTIC FOUR FACE ALARMING NEWS!
4
REED!
OUR EMERGENCY SIGNAL THE TORCH IS IN TROUBLE!
WHAT CAN HAVE HAPPENED?
DON'T WASTE ENERGY ON SPECULATION, SHE-HULK.
WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH WHAT...
HEY!
LOOK OUT!
WE'RE TRAPPED!
AND, BACK ON FIFTH AVENUE...
DRRII-CLIK!
HELLO, THIS IS REED RICHARDS. I'M SORRY, BUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE UNAVAILABLE AT THE MOMENT. IF YOU WOULD LIKE US TO GET BACK IN TOUCH WITH YOU, PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME, NUMBER, AND IF YOU WISH, A SHORT MESSAGE WHEN YOU HEAR THE BEEP. THANK YOU.
BEEEEEEEP!

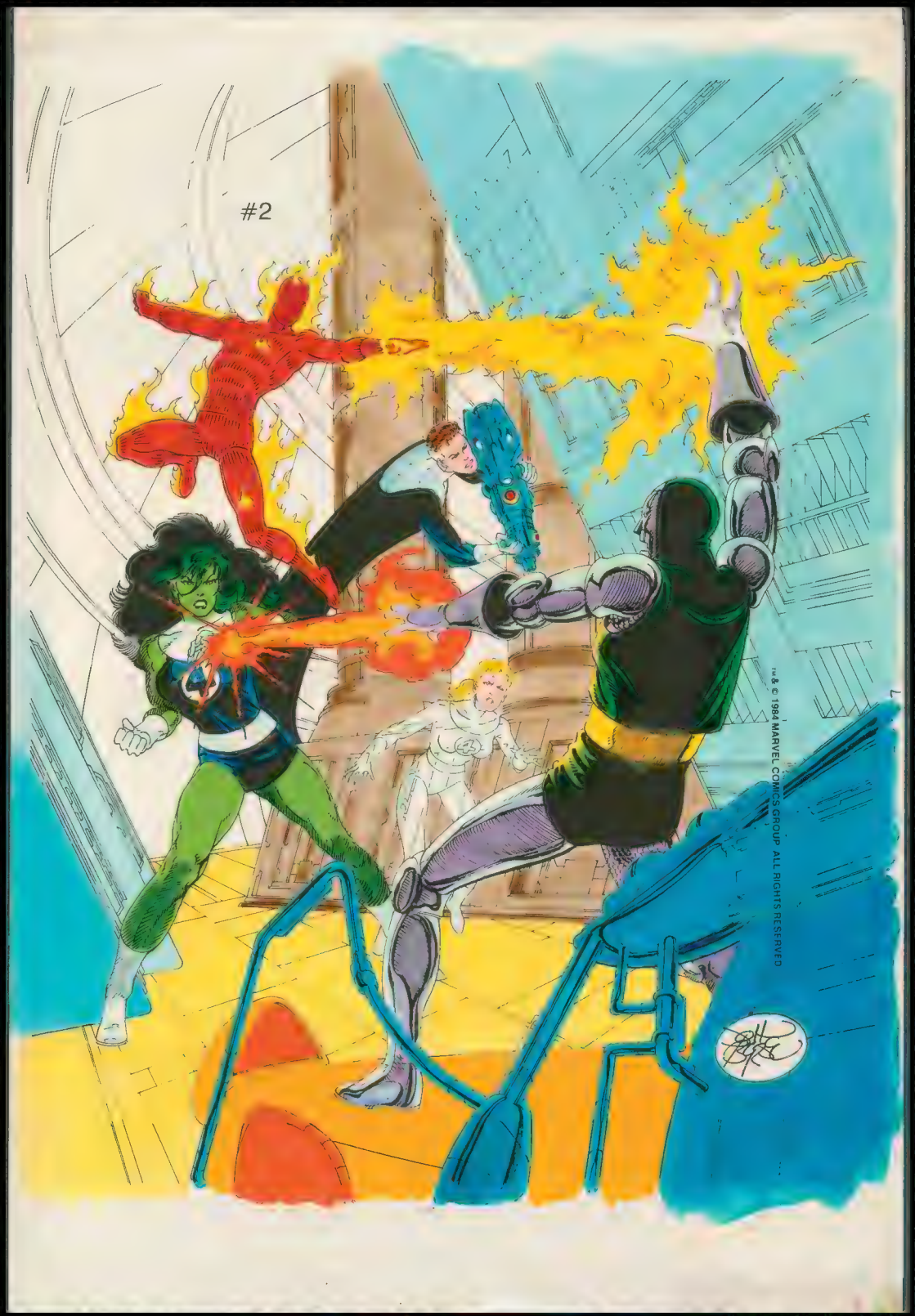
THE FANTASTIC FOUR by JOHN BYRNE — SCRIPT and PENCILS * JERRY ORDWAY — INKS

Marvel Fanfare #30 (September 1985) cover
by John Byrne

Fantastic Four editor Mike Carlin commissioned a new cover logo (below), created by Michael Higgins, that was planned to debut on issue #278. John Byrne preferred the classic logo, so Higgins created an updated iteration of the original 1961 logo.

Courtesy Michael Higgins

In 1984-85, Marvel released a series of 15" x 19" cloth banners. Most used pre-existing artwork, but this FF piece featured unique art by John Byrne | Original painted color art by Glynis Oliver



Courtesy Matthew Scullin

The Fantastic Four #278, page 1 original art
by John Byrne & Jerry Ordway

TRUE LIES
THE TIME HAS COME!
"To be ignorant of what happened before you were born is to be ever a child. "For what is man's lifetime unless the memory of past events is woven with those of earlier times?"
Cicero (106-43 BC)

Stan Lee PRESENTS | JOHN BYRNE SCRIPT AND PENCILS | JERRY ORDWAY INKS | GLYNIS OLIVER COLORS | JOHN WORKMAN LETTERS | MICHAEL CARLIN EDITS | JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEFS

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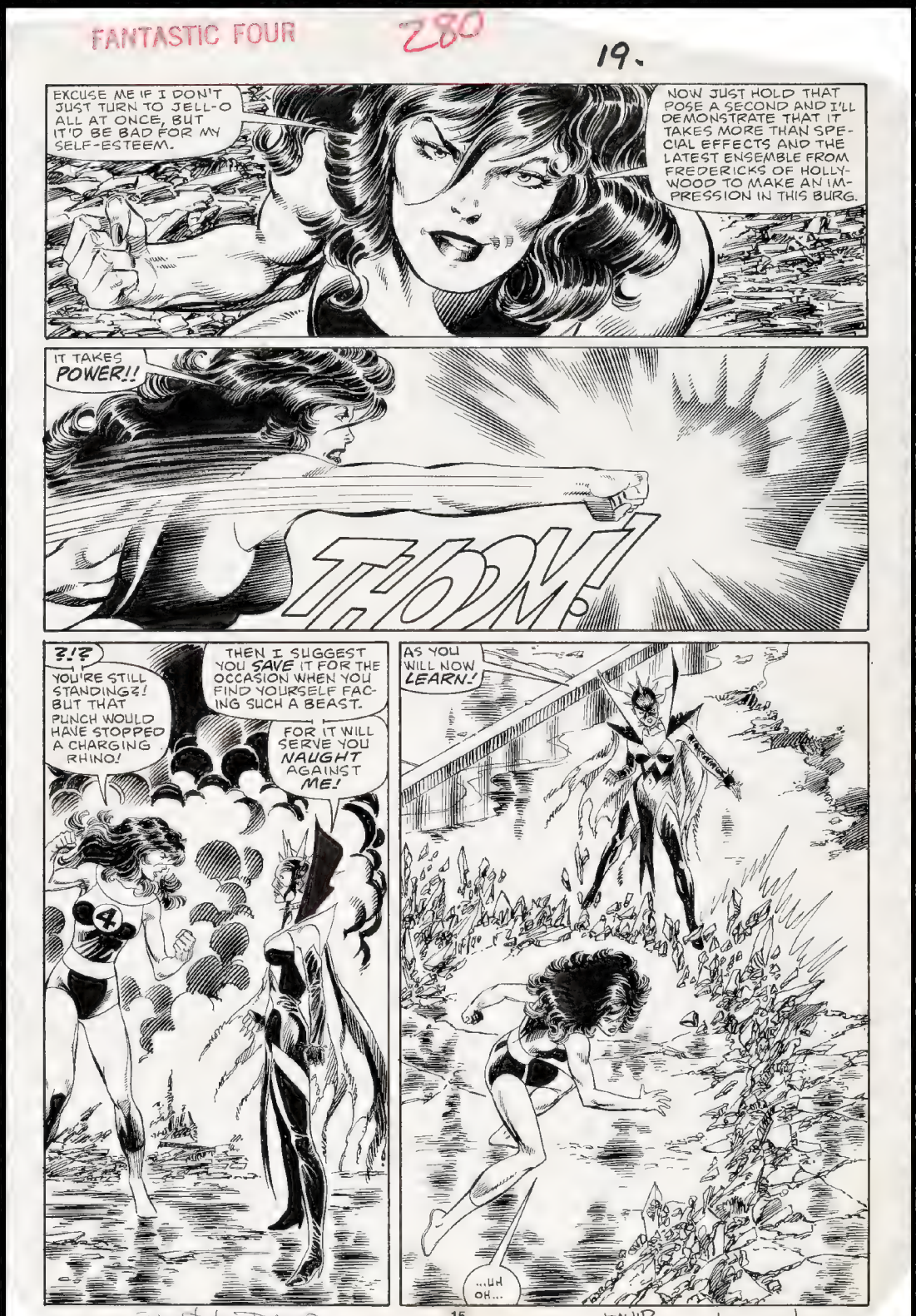
Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Fantastic Four #280, page 15 original art
by John Byrne & Jerry Ordway


FANTASTIC FOUR
280
19.
EXCUSE ME IF I DON'T JUST TURN TO JELL-O ALL AT ONCE, BUT IT'D BE BAD FOR MY SELF-ESTEEM.
NOW JUST HOLD THAT POSE A SECOND AND I'LL DEMONSTRATE THAT IT TAKES MORE THAN SPECIAL EFFECTS AND THE LATEST ENSEMBLE FROM FREDERICKS OF HOLLYWOOD TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION IN THIS BURG.
IT TAKES POWER!!
THOM!
?!?
YOU'RE STILL STANDING?! BUT THAT PUNCH WOULD HAVE STOPPED A CHARGING RHINO!
THEN I SUGGEST YOU SAVE IT FOR THE OCCASION WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF FACING SUCH A BEAST.
FOR IT WILL SERVE YOU NAUGHT AGAINST ME!
AS YOU WILL NOW LEARN!
...UH OH...
15
Best to David
TO DAVID, JERRY ORDWAY

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Fantastic Four #281 cover original art
by John Byrne & Jerry Ordway

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Fantastic Four #283 cover original art
by John Byrne & Jerry Ordway

TITLE: FANTASTIC FOUR
NO: 283
MONTH: OCT.

SCHEDULE:
ARTISTS: BYRNE/ORDWAY

6 13/16 x 10 ½.

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Marvel Graphic Novel #18, page 6 original art
by John Byrne & Kim DeMulder

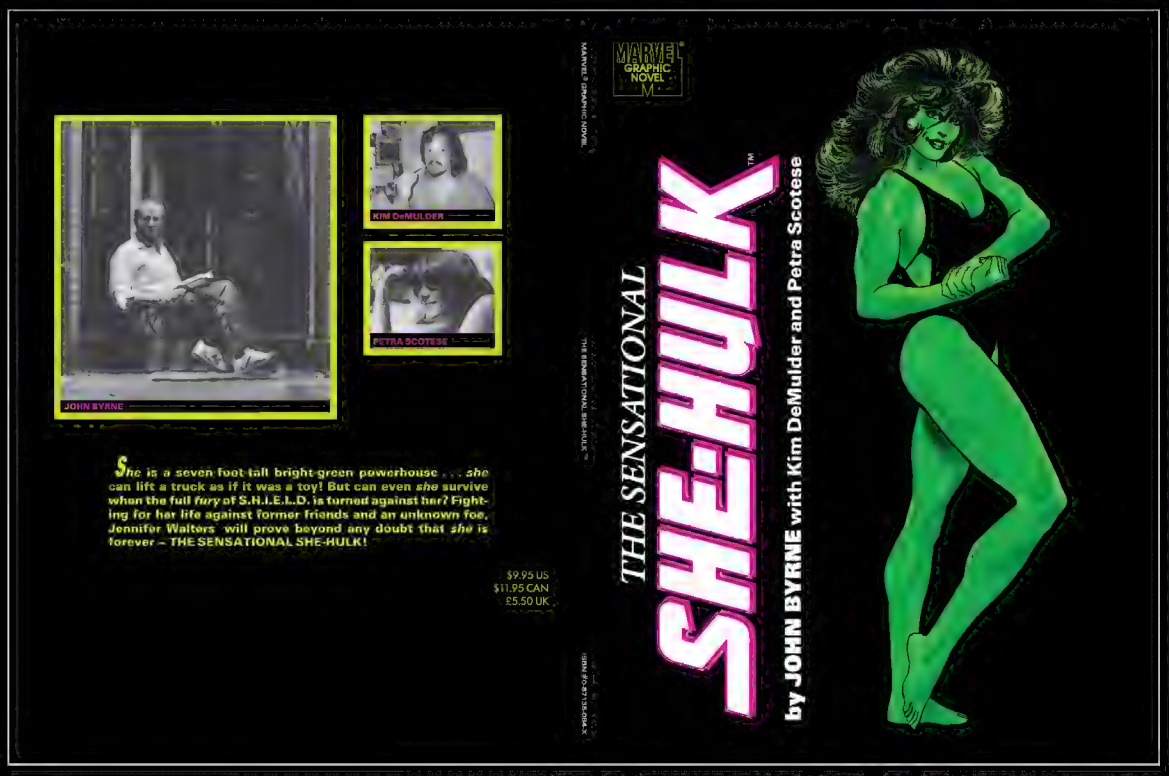
Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Marvel Graphic Novel #18, page 52 original art
by John Byrne & Kim DeMulder

50
HOLD YOUR FIRE!! SHE-HULK IS ON OUR SIDE!
WELL, NOW, I WOULDN'T GO QUITE THAT FAR... BUT I AM ANTI-POOLEY.
WHAT ABOUT THIS SECURITY DOOR? I SUPPOSE THERE'S A REASON I SHOULDN'T JUST RIP IT OPEN?
A COUPLE GOOD ONES!
GAFFER...?
THAT'S THE SINGLE MOST SECURE ACCESS IN THE WHOLE SYSTEM, SHE-HULK.
RIP IT OPEN AND THIS AREA WILL SEAL AND FLOOD WITH HK-357 THE MOST TOXIC NERVE GAS MANUFACTURED.
YOU DON'T WANT UNAUTHORIZED BAD GUYS BUSTING INTO YOUR NERVE CENTER.
BUT THAT'S INTERNAL DEFENSES.
WHAT ABOUT OUTSIDE?

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The 1990 fifth printing of *Marvel Graphic Novel* #18 featured an updated design for the cover and front matter.


JOHN BYRNE
KIM DeMULDER
PETRA SCOTESE
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THE SENSATIONAL SHE-HULK
by JOHN BYRNE with Kim DeMulder and Petra Scotese

Stan Lee presents:

THE SENSATIONAL SHE-HULK

written and penciled by:
JOHN BYRNE
inked by:
KIM DeMULDER
colored by:
PETRA SCOTESE
lettered by:
JANICE CHIANG
editors:
MICHAEL CARLIN & MICHAEL HIGGINS
editor in chief:
JIM SHOOTER

editor in chief
TOM DeFALCO
manufacturing manager
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asst. manufacturing manager
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additional design
DAWN GEIGER
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10 9 8 7 6 5

Marvel Age #30 (September 1985) feature on the year's Annuals including snippets from John Byrne's *The Avengers Annual* #14, page 4 pencil breakdowns.

A PREVIEW OF 1985's ANNUALS

by **Ken Hart**

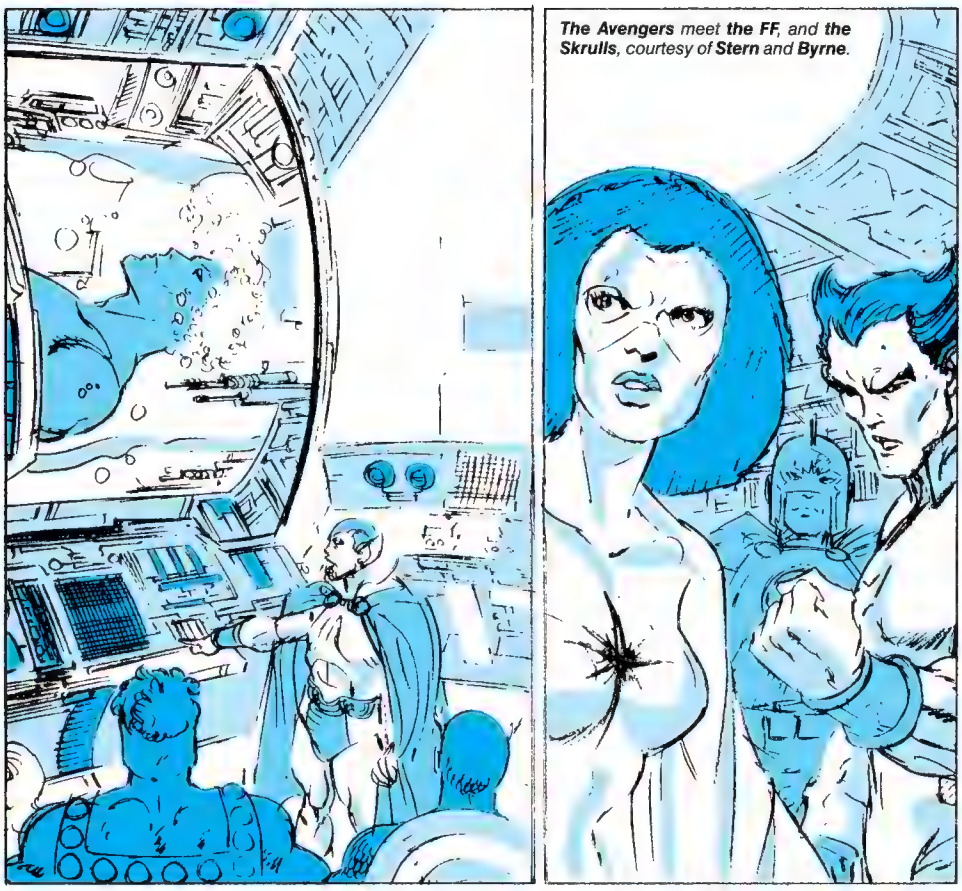
This article is being written near the end of February, a time generally associated with freezing temperatures and biting winds. (So what if New York just had a record high of 75 degrees?) But the sweat and stickiness of summer will be on us before we realize it, making this the perfect time to look ahead at Marvel's exciting annuals.

Judging from comments by the various editors and writers, 1985's group of giant-sized adventures will, for the most part, be tightly interwoven with the regular titles, and with each other as well.

Coming in July, for example, is the **AVENGERS ANNUAL**, scripted by **Roger Stern** and co-plotted with **John Byrne**, who is also supplying pencil breakdowns for the tale. It's followed almost immediately by the **FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL**, written and drawn by **John** and inked by **Joe Sinnott**. According to **Mark Gruenwald**, editor of the **AVENGERS ANNUAL**, the two books cross over and feature both super-teams against the remnants of the mighty **Skrull Empire. The Avengers** will enter deep space in their monthly series, taking us into the annual. As you may remember, the fate of **the Skrulls** has been uncertain ever since **Galactus** ate their homeworld in the pages of **THE FANTASTIC FOUR. Mark** says that, as a result, the governors of each of the **Skrull**-occupied planets has declared himself to be the new emperor. This, of course, leads to civil war among the various **Skrull** factions. One of the groups, which is encountered by **the Avengers**, hasn't been seen in many years, according to **John Byrne**, but its reappearance should certainly delight long-time **FF** fans.

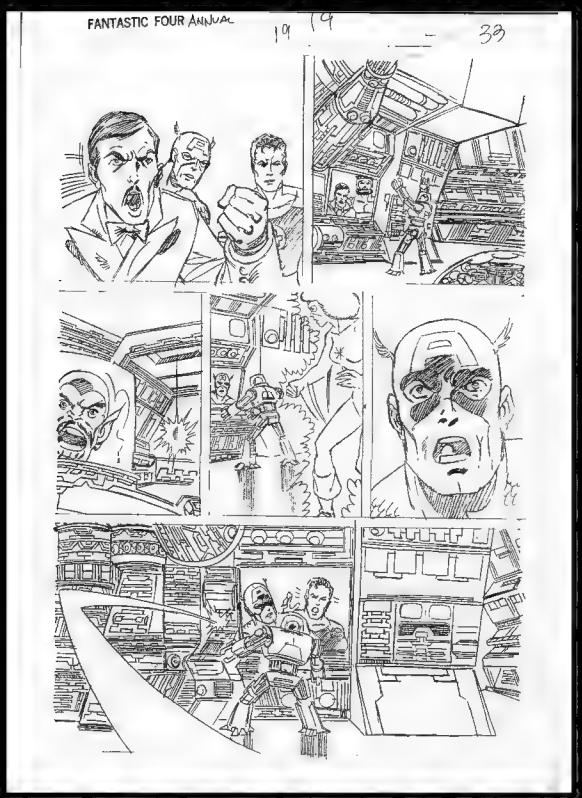
The **FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL's** part of the crossover will feature another **FF** foe not seen in over 20 years. **John** says he has developed a "fairly decent way of bringing him back that doesn't seem too contrived." (Come on, archivists! Make a guess!) The plotlines of the two annuals will converge near their conclusions, so both books will actually feature the same ending, but reached from two different directions.

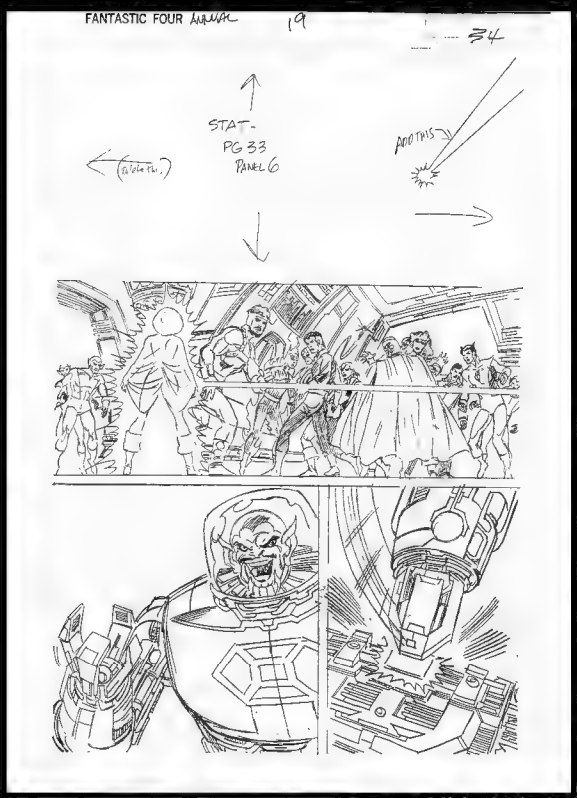
Mark adds ominously that the two annuals will depict "the final resolution not only of **the Skrull Empire,** but of the **Skrull** menace."



***The Avengers** meet **the FF**, and **the Skrulls**, courtesy of **Stern** and **Byrne**.*

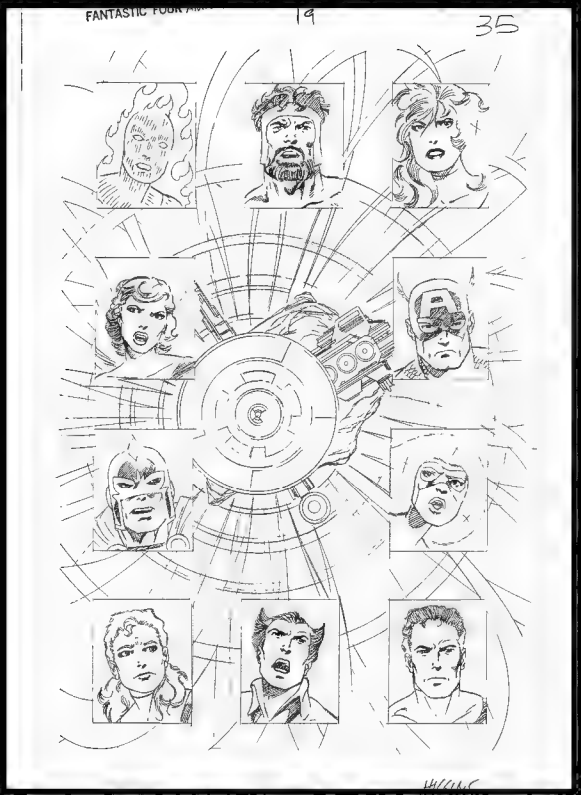
The Fantastic Four Annual #19 and *The Avengers Annual* #14 share the same pencil breakdowns for each issue's final scene. John Byrne & Kyle Baker worked at the standard 11" x 17" art size on *The Avengers Annual* while Byrne & Joe Sinnott

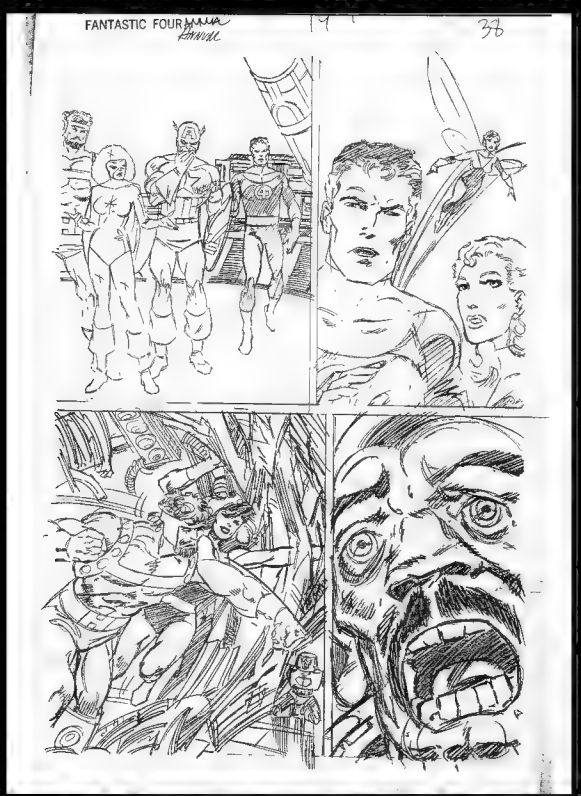




Courtesy Michael Higgins

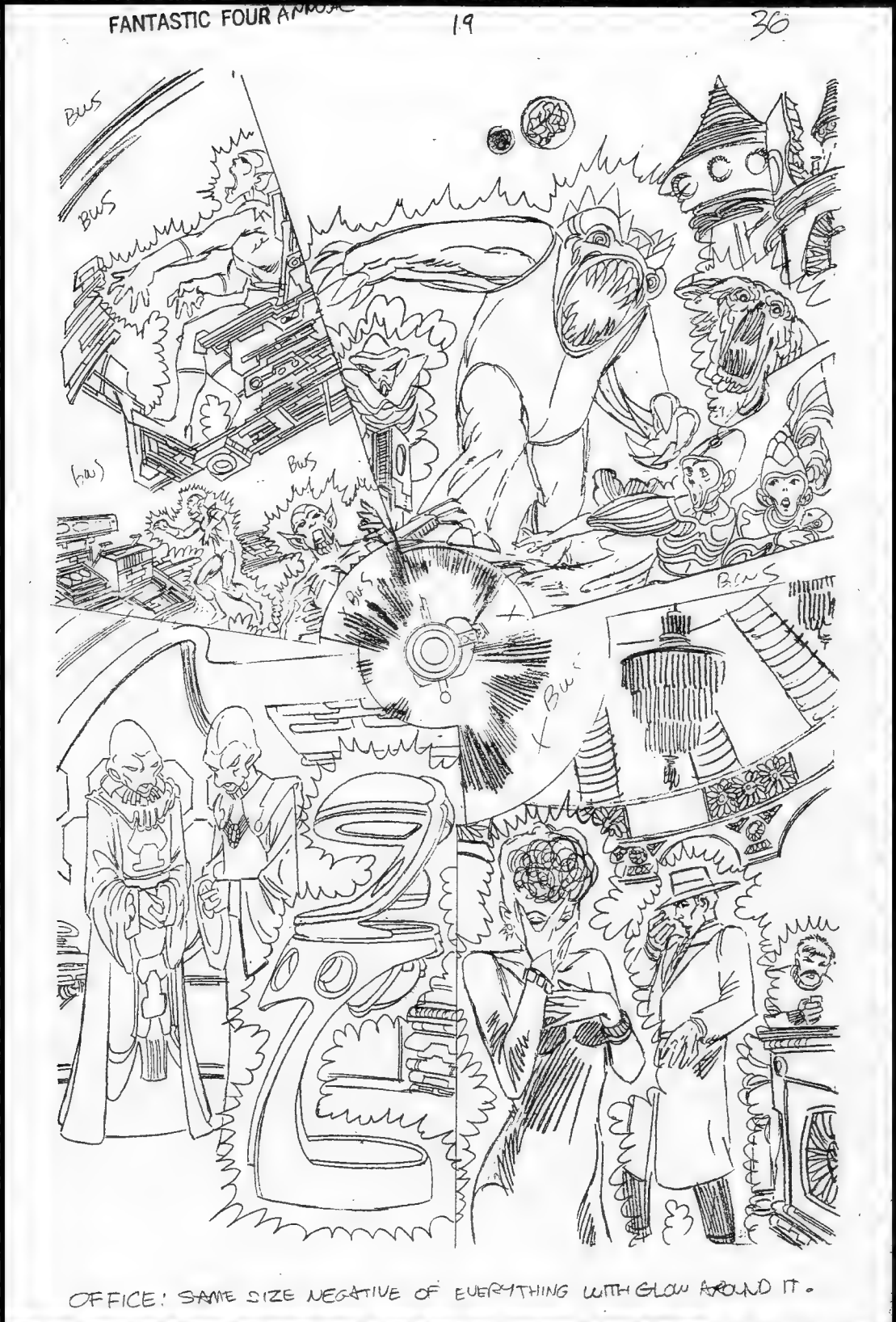
worked at the larger 14" x 21" "twice-up" size on *FF Annual* #19. So that the entire *FF Annual* story would be at twice-up size for Sinnott, Michael Higgins blew up Byrne's pencil art for the shared sequence and translated the art to the larger size.





Courtesy Michael Higgins

This page was dropped from *The Fantastic Four Annual* #19, but made the cut for *The Avengers Annual* #14 | Breakdowns by John Byrne by way of Michael Higgins



Courtesy Michael Higgins

The Fantastic Four Annual #19, unused page original art
by John Byrne & Joe Sinnott

?!?
OOOOH!
I HAD ME A GLOW ON BEFORE, BUT NUTHIN' LIKE THIS!
AMBASSADOR, IS THAT GIFT FROM THE SKRULL CONSUL SUPPOSED TO BE LIGHT-EMITTING?

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Marvel Age editor Jim Salicrup had an in-depth talk with John Byrne for *Comics Interview* #25 (1985). Byrne illustrated a cover parodying his openness to Salicrup's questions for the issue and gave the original art to his interviewer.

Courtesy Jim Salicrup

Fantastic Four Visionaries: John Byrne Vol. 6 TPB (2006) cover
by John Byrne & Avalon's Ian Hannin

Reprinting *The Fantastic Four* #276-284, *The Thing* #23 and *Secret Wars II* #2

BIOGRAPHIES

JOHN BYRNE

With his naturalistic style captivating legions of fans, John Byrne became one of the most influential and popular comic artists of the '70s and '80s. Born in England but raised in Canada, with four years of art school training under his belt, Byrne headed straight for the comics business, getting his start with Charlton Comics.

He produced his first original creations, the robot Rog-2000—which appeared as a backup strip in *E-Man*—and *Doomsday +1* at Charlton. Though the art was rough compared to his later standards, it drew the attention of Marvel Comics, where he found work on *Champions*, *Iron Fist* and *Marvel Team-Up*. The relationship he established on these books with writer Chris Claremont led to his entry on a title that was rapidly ascending in importance at Marvel: the "All-New, All-Different" *X-Men*.

Taking the torch from Dave Cockrum, for the next five years Byrne penciled and co-plotted the adventures of Marvel's mutants. His fresh style translated perfectly to the new cast of characters, and together Byrne and Claremont built the X-Men into a keystone title at Marvel. However, just after the twin triumphs of "The Dark Phoenix Saga" and "Days of Future Past," Byrne left the book.

His next major achievement was a long run as writer/artist on *Fantastic Four* that restored the title to its imaginative best. His run hearkened back to the glory days of Lee and Kirby and is arguably the milestone achievement of his career. Other high points in his early '80s Marvel work included "War and Remembrance," a bracing set of Captain America stories with Roger Stern and *Alpha Flight*, a team of Canadian heroes written and drawn by Byrne.

Next, Byrne headed to DC Comics to revive the flagging Superman franchise with a reset of the Superman mythos that was enormously popular at the time and is still hailed as a masterpiece decades later. After two years helming Superman, Byrne returned to Marvel to work on a diverse set of books including the New Universe's *Star Brand*, the irreverent *Sensational She-Hulk* and the high-tech adventures of Iron Man. In the 1990s, Byrne launched his creator-owned series *Next Men*, scripted the first issues of Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* and delivered the goods for both Marvel and DC on numerous titles. Today, the implacable Byrne continues to write, draw and preside over a popular website. He was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame in 2015.

AL MILGROM

Though arguably his highest profile in comics came as the fan-favorite editor of *Marvel Fanfare*, Al Milgrom has made significant contributions as a penciler, inker and writer over his four decades in the industry. Al came up in the '70s both assisting the legendary artist Murphy Anderson and later serving as one of Neal Adams' Crusty Bunkers art squad, in the meantime having his early work published at Charlton Comics, Atlas/Seaboard, Warren and the indie sci-fi anthology *Star*Reach*. His first major inroads in the industry occurred with Marvel, where he followed up Jim Starlin for a long run drawing *Captain Marvel*. Continuing with the sci-fi themes of his seminal creative efforts, he also drew the ongoing adventures of the Guardians of the Galaxy in *Marvel Presents*. At DC, he would develop Firestorm with Gerry Conway. In 1982, Marvel launched the anthology title *Marvel Fanfare*, which often featured Milgrom's editorial notes in cartoon form under the moniker "Editori-Al." While editing that long-running series, Milgrom also had ongoing stints penciling *The Avengers* and *West Coast Avengers* and drew the notable miniseries *Secret Wars II* and *Kitty Pryde & Wolverine*. He also scripted *Spectacular Spider-Man* and *Incredible Hulk*. Since the '90s, Milgrom has spent most of his time inking, with an impressive nine-year run on *X-Factor* and work for Archie amongst his many credits.

JIM SHOOTER

Writer/artist/editor/publisher Jim Shooter broke into comics as a precocious 13-year-old after submitting a batch of Legion of Super-Heroes pages he had written and drawn. Impressed by what was going on at Marvel, the teenager brought his "Marvel-style" attitude to bear on Legion, rolling off a three-year run that concluded in 1969. During this time, he introduced several memorable Legionnaires and villains and also wrote several stories in *Superman*.

After a five-year break from comics, Shooter returned to the scene, freelancing for both Marvel and DC. He retook the reins of Legion in *Superboy*, and wrote various Marvel titles, which led to a staff position at Marvel in 1976 and a memorable run on *Avengers*. After two years, he succeeded Archie Goodwin as Marvel's editor-in-chief. In his view, Marvel at that time was in editorial chaos, not capitalizing on its full potential. Only 27 years old, Shooter forced his will over all aspects of the publishing regime, establishing an incentive system for creators, streamlining the publishing schedule and enforcing his own high editorial standards on all the books. He continued Marvel's success with licensed titles *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers* and the Epic line of creator-owned comics. Creative efforts included writing *Secret Wars* and its sequel, and building the New Universe and writing its flagship title, *Starbrand*.

Forced out of the company in 1987, a bid by Shooter to buy Marvel failed. He then formed a group to start his own company, Valiant, which produced licensed and original comics to great acclaim in the early '90s. Despite Valiant's success, Shooter's tenure there was ended after losing control of the corporation. Short-lived imprints Defiant and Broadway Comics followed but were victims of the mid-'90s industry bust. Since then, Shooter has returned to DC to write a 13-issue run of *Legion*, and overseen a revival of Gold Key characters Magnus, Doctor Solar and Turok for Dark Horse.

ROGER STERN

Born in Noblesville, Indiana, in 1950, Roger Stern was a self-professed "child of the '50s," immersing himself in pop culture icons like Lucille Ball, the Lone Ranger, and especially Superman. After graduating from Indiana University, Stern worked at Indianapolis' WXLW radio and formed a comic fan collective with fans in the region. Stern teamed with fellow Hoosier Bob Layton to transform Layton's comic sales business into the fanzine *CPL* (*Contemporary Pictorial Literature*). Their efforts led to an offer from Charlton to create the publisher's official fanzine, *Charlton Bullseye*. Soon after, Stern's fandom pal Roger Slifer contacted him with an opportunity to interview for a Marvel staff job. Stern raced to New York to put his passion for comics to the test. He was hired as an assistant editor and in 1975 embarked on an eleven-year career at Marvel. Stern's early editing duties saw him guiding the Avengers family of titles, *Master of Kung Fu*, *Spider-Woman*, and others. He also presided over *X-Men* during the seminal Chris Claremont, John Byrne, and Terry Austin run, and plotted *Marvel Premiere* #50 starring rocker Alice Cooper.

In 1978, he began to take on regular writing work on *The Incredible Hulk* and *Doctor Strange*. His compelling storytelling quickly earned him an audience and turns writing *Captain America* and Spider-Man in *The Spectacular Spider-Man*. The latter title led to his tenure on *The Amazing Spider-Man*, a run regarded by many as second only to Stan Lee's. Amongst their many Spidey highlights, Stern and artist John Romita Jr. introduced the Hobgoblin and a new Captain Marvel, Monica Rambeau. Stern also began a long stint on *The Avengers*, launched *West Coast Avengers*, and returned for another celebrated run on *Doctor Strange*.

When his tenure with Marvel came to an end in the late '80s, Stern became indelibly linked to the Man of Steel with iconic work that included "The Death of Superman." Since then "Uncle Rog," as he is known to his devoted fans, has returned to Marvel to write several series including *Avengers Forever*, *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Marvel: The Lost Generation*, *Captain America Corps*, and more.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over America, a new storytelling medium was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States. At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary creators as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee.

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-7
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the Golden Age retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, the Atlas Era had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

In August 1961, change hit newsstands: *The Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. They were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves — and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different — the beginning of the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-26
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-3
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-24
THE BLACK PANTHER VOLS. 1-3
BROTHER VOODOO VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-16
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-6
THE CHAMPIONS VOL. 1
DAREDEVIL VOLS. 1-18
DAZZLER VOLS. 1-4
DEATHLOK VOL. 1
THE DEFENDERS VOLS. 1-9
DOCTOR STRANGE VOLS. 1-10
THE FANTASTIC FOUR VOLS. 1-26
GHOST RIDER VOLS. 1-5
HOWARD THE DUCK VOLS. 1-2
THE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-2
THE INCREDIBLE HULK VOLS. 1-18
THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN VOLS. 1-17
IRON FIST VOLS. 1-2
KA-ZAR VOLS. 1-3
KILLRAVEN VOL. 1
LUKE CAGE VOLS. 1-3
MARVEL RARITIES VOL. 1
MARVEL TEAM-UP VOLS. 1-7
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE VOLS. 1-7
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-22
MS. MARVEL VOLS. 1-2
NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
NOT BRAND ECHH VOL. 1
OMEGA THE UNKNOWN VOL. 1
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK VOLS. 1-2
SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-4
THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-7
SPIDER-WOMAN VOLS. 1-4
THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-8
THE TOMB OF DRACULA VOLS. 1-3
WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
WEREWOLF BY NIGHT VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-16

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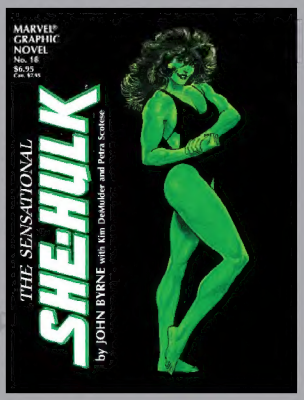
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